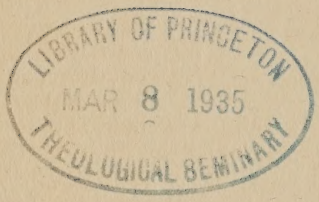

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Religion Meets the Modern Mind

By

RUSSELL HENRY STAFFORD

Minister of Old South Church, Boston

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PREFACE

EVERYBODY is interested in religion. In parlor cars and day coaches alike there is one subject which comes up more often and stirs up more fire than politics. That subject is religion.

I have tried to write a book about religion for everybody. I hope it will be easy to read. Books on popular subjects ought to be. Many books on religion make the reader tired, but it ought to be possible to put the greatest ideas in simple terms. Jesus did. That is one of the secrets of his attractiveness.

This book is the work of a free mind, addressed to an age of candid search for truth. When I began thinking for myself about religion I tried out nearly every position that is likely to occur to an eager young man. I have tried atheism, agnosticism, and all the rest. If the view I now hold is much like that held today by most evangelical Christians, that is not because of any prejudice to begin with. It may confirm a traditional faith, but in a new scientific setting, where every belief meets the acid test. I shall be happy if in revealing the Odyssey of one mind, it helps others toward religious understanding.

RUSSELL HENRY STAFFORD.

Old South Church in Boston.

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I.

The Field of Religion

1.

RELIGION and theology are not the same thing. Religion is the country, theology the map. Religion is a fact of human experience. Theology, like biology, describes what it cannot create. The word theology has acquired a good many unpleasant associations. To many it describes a forbidding and uninviting array of dogma. To others it suggests endless bickering over doctrines and a stern hatred of opposing creeds. These associations may be excused in the light of much that has passed in the name of theology; but, in truth, everyone who thinks at all is interested in theology. Both the cornerstore atheist and the parson are theologians if they try to think in an orderly manner about religion.

That is what we are attempting to do here. Perhaps first of all we ought to define religion. No doubt you have heard violent arguments which were finally interrupted by one adversary or the other saying, "Wait a minute. Let's define our terms." Had the terms been defined at the outset there probably would not have been any argument at all.

Everyone knows what religion is, but it is not easy to

put the meaning of anything so tremendous into simple words. It will not help us in this instance to go back to the root meaning of the word. For this word comes to us freighted with varied associations from so many centuries that its root meaning is no guide at all to what religion stands for in modern speech.

So suppose we begin with the most obvious idea and say that religion means belief in a God or gods. *Belief*, however, is not big enough to describe the attitude of the religious person. His belief is always expressed in some sort of practice, as for instance in worship. Perhaps we had better say "relationship." But, if there be a God, we must all stand in some relation to Him, whether we know it or not. We should not ordinarily call a man religious, however, who had not become aware of this connection. Our definition, then, must be changed to read, "Religion means conscious relationship to a God or gods."

Now the gods men acknowledge have sometimes been simply convenient personifications of nature forces. Much of primitive belief concerned itself solely with attempts to achieve material results through sacred rites. These rites usually imitated or were symbolic of natural processes. Thus what passes at first glance for religion served as a sort of makeshift for science until the birth of the modern scientific spirit. Supposedly religious practices of this type are nothing more than magic. The essence of magic is this: whatever gods there may be are impersonal and utilitarian. But this is surely not what we understand by religion. The essence of religion as we moderns have come to know it is the recognition of what we call personality. A further change is therefore required in our

definition: "Religion means conscious relationship to a God or gods, when these gods are considered as personal."

Does this really cover the field? How about Buddhism, for instance? Buddhism is one of the great religions of the world. Yet in the doctrine of its founder, still maintained virtually uncorrupted in Ceylon and Burma, it recognizes no higher being than man as supreme or permanent. But it inculcates the full recognition of personality and personal rights in one's fellow-men, of whatever caste or station, and brotherly love in consequence. Much the same is true of Confucianism.

Coming down to our own time, we find August Comte establishing a "religion of humanity" in the nineteenth century. And our "religious humanists" are reviving and revising Comte's teaching today. They pay no homage to any person higher than man. But there is a truly religious fervor in the homage they pay to man and his innate capacities and possibilities for improving himself.

Moreover, all of us have observed an ardor, so nearly akin to religious devotion as to be identical, in certain socialists and defenders of other systems which propose to remake society. These types of feeling may be, in the opinion of some, religion short-sighted, truncated, doomed to sterility and early decline. But, as long as they go on looking like religion, feeling like religion, taking the place of religion, and producing religious results, we can hardly refuse to call them forms of religion merely because we do not think they are what religion ought to be.

What is the essence of religion in forms which do not acknowledge any god? It seems to be the recognition of personality in human beings, and an ardent response to their personal needs and rights. When other persons

are used or abused for our convenience, as if they were just animated articles of the world's furniture, that is sin. When our fellows are seen to be like us in nature, and are treated with such consideration as we desire for ourselves, that is morality. And also, we must be prepared to admit, it is religion.

So we have to include both the gods and human beings as parties of the second part in the relationship we call religion. Either or both may be the objects of belief and worship. To leave the gods out does not necessarily involve loss of the religious quality. That quality is sustained wherever stress is laid on personal relations with persons. Our working definition may now be brought to its final form: "Religion is a conscious relationship between ourselves and the personal factors in our environment, as such." The words "as such" are of prime importance, for to treat the gods as if they were not persons is magic; and to treat any human being as if he were not a person is an offense against morality.

2.

Religion as a typical human attitude is one of the facts of life. Whether we like it or not, whether or not we think there is anything in it, there it is.

We may be go-getters, holding that no one matters but ourselves, and that our only business is to look out for "number one." Nevertheless, the fact remains that a great many people since the birth of the race have disagreed with us, and have been altruists, putting their theoretical unselfishness into daily practice. That is one of the facts of religion. We cannot understand life as a whole until

we have taken note of it, and found some kind of explanation for it.

Or we may be atheists, maintaining that the world just happened. Nevertheless, the fact remains that most of our fellow-men have from the start believed that the world is planned and presided over by a God or gods for His or their sovereign ends. And by no means all who have taken this position have done so just as a short cut to a haphazard understanding of life, making a long guess because they lacked the patience or the capacity for scientific research. A great many of the masters of science take this same position, not only believing in God but humbly endeavoring to serve Him. This also is one of the facts of religion. We have to grasp it, and grapple with it somehow, if we are going to be intelligent inhabitants of the real world.

Religion is not a simple fact. It has existed in countless forms among all peoples in all ages. It has propounded creeds of nearly every conceivable complexion. It has founded and sustained massive and powerful institutions, like the Buddhist Order, the Christian Church, the Caliphate, and the Papacy. These have remolded human affairs. Religion has inspired movements which have changed history, like the Crusades and modern missions—both of them called Christian, both of them carried on in non-Christian territories, but as far apart in character as black and white. It has made war and peace, and converted by the sword and by the word.

All this vast assemblage of contrasting yet interrelated facts and circumstances has to be looked into in accurate detail, and set in a clear light, if we are to know all we need to know about one of the major influences which

have brought mankind to where it is today. This inexhaustible field of research belongs to theology as an historical science.

Our concern, however, is not with the long historical aspect of religion, but with its present appeal. We are going to try to discover what the truth is that justifies the enormous spread and power of religion and the hold it has upon us today. To this attempt we are spurred on by the very nature of our minds. For we are unwilling to go on occupying any distinct viewpoint without thinking out our reasons for it.

Sometimes our reason is that we have been told that certain things are so. But nowadays most people insist on thinking for themselves. When we do think for ourselves, and come to our own conclusions, then we are amateur theologians, working out a more or less original system of ideas to account for our general attitude toward life, and whatever belief it may be based upon.

No man can respect his own intelligence if he thinks with his feelings instead of with his brain. Thinking with one's feelings is another way of describing prejudice. The study of theology, even in an amateur way, as indeed of any other department of learning, is a tonic to correct this tendency we all have. But theology is of special importance because religious prejudice does more harm, probably, in human relations, than any other form of sentimentality. It often makes well-meaning people belligerent and offensive toward their neighbors of other faiths, whereas he who can give reasons for the faith that is in him will usually respect other men's reasons, too.

This comes about because good, hard thinking about religion brings us up a path with many side-turnings, and

we are able to see why some of our friends are persuaded to turn aside at some one of them, even though we prefer to climb straight ahead. Also, we may not be altogether sure that we ourselves have not at some point mistaken the direction. In other words, we do not achieve finality.

And why should be expect to? The realm of religion is as big and bewildering as the realm of nature. The men who investigate nature we call scientists. All scientists are seeking the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Nevertheless, all of them are content if they find some of the truth; none of them would claim to have reached the whole truth, or to be competent to do so; and some of them espouse opinions now and then which are not true at all. But by doing so they do not incur the scorn and hatred of their fellow-scientists. For all scientists respect one another's integrity of intention, and admit their own fallibility, even when they think that science as a whole is infallible. This is equally true of all theologians who work in the scientific spirit.

We shall find some of the truth. We cannot possibly find all of it. We may make some mistakes. Realizing that danger, we must not be uncharitable toward others whom we believe to be wrong beyond question, provided they give evidence that they are honestly doing their best and thinking their clearest.

Some truth, however, we shall certainly find. For I repeat that religion, including that faith in God which is its most generally recognizable characteristic, is a fact. It is a fact that indubitably helps men into better relations with their kind and the world in which they live. Mankind has never been able to get along without it, except for very brief intervals. And, unless we are will-

ing to say that the whole course of nature is a lamentable joke, an element so indispensable to the life of man as is religion must be grounded in the fundamental truth of the universe.

II.

The Grounds of Certainty

I.

EVERY one of us holds some religious belief—some set of theological opinions. We all believe something about the meaning and direction of human experience, whether every point of our creed be clear to us or not, and whether our creed be principally one of affirmation or of denial.

For a belief of any sort on this or any other subject a man must have authority of some kind. It is of prime moment to determine the nature of religious authority.

The typical conservative says, "The old-time religion is good enough for me. I learned it at my mother's knee, and I believe what she taught me." Perhaps that is as good a starting point as another, though it does not carry us very far. If your mother has died, it is possible for you to idealize her and exaggerate her wisdom as a tribute of bereaved affection. But if she is still living, it is not easy for her grown children to accept her word about anything as final. If you do so about religion, this is the exception which proves the rule.

In most connections you have to act on your own judgment. Doubtless you respect your mother's years and ex-

perience. You are ready to admit that she has more insight into vital values than you have. Yet on matters of fact you may be better informed than she is. And on points of practical policy you find that you cannot always trust her sagacity. If she tried to tell you how to run your business, the probability is that you would soon remind her that it was your business, not hers. Yet religion is not only a matter of values. It is also a question of fact, and has weight in determining policies. So, in religion as in everything else, we have to ask, "What makes my mother sure that she is right?"

Our mothers represent in this connection our families in general, our social group, the prevailing influences of our environment, the whole body of tradition which dictates inherited opinions. Tradition has to be scrutinized. It carries in itself no sufficient guarantee of accuracy if what we want is truth, not simply comfort.

Suppose we say that our mothers base their faith on deep religious experience which gives them a warm intuitive inner certainty. I have great respect for certainty of that sort. I should feel very skeptical about the sincerity of my faith if it did not produce such an assurance. But, unless I am very much mistaken, it is faith which, upon testing, results in assurance, instead of assurance resulting in faith. People who would verify tremendous assertions by citing as evidence their own unshakable conviction that these assertions are so are putting the cart before the horse. What we have to inquire is, How did they get in the first place these ideas about which they now feel so positive?

Here is one of the points at which we have to guard against thinking with our feelings. And what else are

we doing, if we rest our case on our own religious experience or another's without digging down to the roots of this assurance in reason? If it turns out that it has no roots in reason, sensible people will give it up.

It is possible to be very certain indeed of things that are not true. I once nearly had a fight in defense of the thesis that Tasmania was not an island. I was perfectly sure that Tasmania was part of the Australian mainland. My conviction had all the glow and color of a mystical revelation. I was ready to die for a sublime geographical principle. My opponent, however, did not trouble to argue with me after the first five minutes had shown my bullheadedness. He merely brought out a geography and then produced living witnesses to the book's veracity in the persons of sailors who had visited the island of Tasmania; for the dispute took place on shipboard. I had to admit that the only thing wrong with my feeling of certainty was that I happened to be entirely mistaken. Ever since then I have tried to make sure of my facts on some better basis than intuition.

Where, then, did the ideas in which our mothers taught us to believe originate? In the final analysis, in the Church. And the spokesmen of the Church are preachers. But preachers sometimes make mistakes. It hurts to confess it, yet it is true. I have propounded notions from the pulpit in the past which I could not think of maintaining today. I can only hope that they did no harm to anyone who heard them.

I know and have known hundreds of other preachers of every denomination, all the way from Unitarians to Roman Catholics. On the whole, they are a fine body of men—honest, earnest, and intelligent. But they are all

in the same boat with me, so far as I can see, when it comes to saying the wrong thing now and then with the best of intentions. And all of them will admit it, privately at least.

But in major matters of doctrine surely the preachers are told what to say by the Church or the branch of it to which they belong. Then we have yet to find out how the Church collectively, made up of preachers and the laymen whom they teach, can be more infallible than these good church members are individually. Perhaps their councils or conventions are miraculously protected from error. Evidence to that effect, however, is strangely lacking. If they were, it is surprising that the members of these councils should so often conflict with one another.

Of course, if one wants to declare that one's own Church is alone in enjoying this complete divine guidance in propounding its dogmas, and if one is further prepared to explain successive statements from the same source which contradict each other in terms of a subtle development of doctrine, one can obviate a good many troublesome facts. But to attend any gathering, however sanctified, which has assembled under the auspices of any Church for purposes of creedal legislation, is to discover that to all appearances measures are debated and passed here in just about the same way as in any political congress, sometimes even through lobbying and various types of questionable personal pressure. It takes more credulity than the modern man can muster to accept the mere word of the Church without anything in the nature of evidence.

Behind the Church is the Bible. And we have been told that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. But we are approaching our study of religion as

unprejudiced truth-seekers, paying no attention to what we have been told by people who are already sure. When we come to the Bible in this spirit, what do we find? Not one book, but sixty-six of them under one cover. They include books on nearly every subject from nearly every viewpoint. Some of these books are by authors unknown even by name.

All of these books, so the scholars who have thoroughly looked into them tell us, represent a pre-scientific attitude toward nature. They are not always to be depended on for history. They often represent divergent opinions and record variant reports on some of the main subjects they discuss. If we are to take the Bible's word, we shall often have to choose which of several words we prefer. We can hardly accept the Bible as our final religious authority, on these confusing terms, and let it go at that.

But there is a unifying strand, after all, in the multicolored weaving of the Biblical literature. That literature tells us of one outstanding person. That person is Jesus. The diverse elements of the Bible are tied together by what each of them contributes to our understanding of his life, of all that prepared the way for him, and of what in consequence of his teaching happened soon after his life on earth was over. It is his word which is the central and ultimate authority for Christians—not traditions, or preachers, or the Church, or the Bible, but the word of Jesus, of which these are designed to be vehicles.

As to the extent of his authority we shall have to speak in a further discussion. But we must settle now the nature of his authority since it is the grounds of religious certainty that we are now investigating.

We cannot settle this question, however, until we have

noted what authority in general means for men of modern mind. On this point there can hardly be any doubt. When we speak of consulting the authorities, we mean going to the experts for their advice. Ours is an age of specialization. No man nowadays dreams of attempting to learn everything. But every man wants to know one thing all the way through. And he goes to other men equally or better versed in other lines, when he needs to know what to do in regions in which he recognizes his own inadequacy. We go to a physician when we are sick, to a lawyer when we need legal advice, to an engineer when we have a building project to carry out. We trust their authority, because they know their business. That is what authority means to us: the competence of an expert along his own line. The only place where our free choice comes in is in choosing the best expert for our purposes.

That, likewise, is the nature of Jesus' authority. He is an expert in religion and right living. Not the only expert, of course. Whether he is the best expert or not remains for us to consider at another time. But the thing we have to do, if we want religious certainty, is to consult the best expert we know, and follow his directions.

2.

There is a deeper doubt than this, though, which we must still face. Can even an expert know anything, really, about the sort of truth with which religion professes to deal? Can one ever be sure of anything in these misty regions? So many people have been mistaken; what is to show that we are right?

We can be sure, at least, that we are right as far as

anyone can now see. The range of vision may some day be extended. And then what we see may be revealed in different proportions to the whole from what we now suppose. Nevertheless, making this allowance, we can be sure, even though we cannot prove that we are right.

There is a difference between practical certainty and mathematical certainty, running all through life, and not confined to the religious field. Mathematical certainty is alone susceptible of full and rigorous proof. But practical certainty, based upon overwhelming probability, gives fully as good service, for all the purposes with which we are ordinarily concerned.

A high degree of certainty, based upon mathematics, is to be found in the natural sciences. Yet even this certainty is not beyond question by the hypercritical. The sciences take it for granted that the five senses tell us the truth about the world. But ever since the philosopher Kant there has been a good deal of doubt as to the share the human mind has in making the world as we sense it. Probably there is more selection and artificial reconstruction taking place than we at first suspect, when nature is filtered through the senses into our brains. Scientific thinkers have been busy of late looking into the presupposition of the scientific method about the truth given us by the senses, and often in some degree discounting it.

Moreover, we know that each of the senses responds to a limited range of vibrations only. There are vast ranges with which we have no means of coming into touch. So there is doubtless much more in the world than we can know, and any story science tells must perforce be only a fragment of the total account of reality.

Furthermore, we go right ahead judging what is going

to happen by what has happened before. But we have only probability to guide us in doing so. For, as a matter of fact, the future has not yet happened, and we cannot be utterly positive that it ever will. The astronomers predict an eclipse, and so far all their predictions have come true. But have we any absolute proof that they will go on working out so dependably? Who knows even that the sun will rise tomorrow?

We say, however, that we know it will. And we do know it. For knowledge is any compelling measure of rationally grounded assurance. Only where mathematical calculations and the like are concerned can it be anvthing more.

In history also practical certainty is all we have to go by. How do we know that the great figures of the past ever really lived—Cæsar, Charlemagne, Washington? There is abundance of testimony from contemporaries, to be sure. And doubtless many things today are as they are because someone in the past exerted influence of the kinds we have learned to associate with these figures. Yet none of us ever saw any of them, none of us ever talked with any of the contemporary witnesses, none of us can demonstrate to the exclusion of all possible doubt that the records are not forgeries or lies. For all that, does anyone really question that Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Washington did live, and lived about as the historians narrate?

Now, with proper care as we proceed, and precautions against any unwarranted leaps in the dark, we can achieve religious certainty which has the same kind of dependability as scientific and historical knowledge. Proof, in the mathematical sense, is out of our reach in all three regions. But overwhelming probability will assuredly be available,

either for or against our tenets. We may even go so far, after our investigations are complete, as to call this mountain of probability, in the scales against a handful of dusty skepticism, by the firm name of knowledge. Knowledge it will be, in the only meaning which is generally legitimate for that term. But knowledge we shall never have unless we are courageous enough to follow truth wherever it leads, instead of drawing back if some of our cherished views are imperiled in its advance.

III.

The Range of Personality

1.

WE HAVE found that religion is a personal relation with persons, real or imaginary. None but a person can be religious. None but persons can be the objects of religious devotion. So we have next to investigate exactly what we mean by a person.

When we begin to analyze the idea for which this word stands, two other words come to us at once: life and mind. A person is a living being. But so is a tree. A person is a living being who thinks. But so, in some degree, is any animal. In even the simplest structures of the animal type there are signs of the same order of activity which in its higher forms we call mind. Yet animals are not persons, and men are. What quality or power of mind is it which distinguishes a man from an animal, and leads us to recognize that a man is a person?

It seems to be what is called self-consciousness. Self-consciousness means just what it says—consciousness of one's self. A living being at the human level is aware not only of things around him but also of himself as an object of his own thought. He can get out of himself, so to speak, and look in a more or less detached way both at

himself and at the things around him. And he can reflect on what he thus sees. So, because he is self-conscious, he can take the second thought.

The first thought, common to all animals, is of the environment at that very moment. The second thought, peculiar to a person, is an imaginative embracing of self and environment, first in their actual relations, then in past relations with which the present contrasts, finally in various other relations which appear to be possible in the future. Thought of the past self-and-environment is memory. Thought of the future self-and-environment is foresight. All the higher developments of intelligence are based on this simple foundation, the capacity to take the second thought.

By "person," then, we mean a living being who is self-conscious, and therefore carries in his own nature the seed, at least, of reflection upon the whole world and everything in it. Such reflection is the path to understanding.

Our minds should be open to the possibility that there may be other persons besides man in the world. If there are, certainly we cannot see them. But can we see life, or mind, or any man? We see bodies, and judge of the life and mind in them by the way they act. We know the difference between a living body and a corpse, well enough to tell which is which. But how, on the ground of mere observation through the senses, would you put that difference into words?

It can be described physiologically, of course. The corpse no longer moves. The beating of the heart, the fanning of the breath have stopped. The corpse does not take in nourishment and build new tissue. Instead, it is breaking down slowly into the particles out of which it

was made by the life that was in it. But what makes this difference? Could the life be seen, except by its effects, either while it was in the body, or when it was passing out? Where did the life come from, whither has it gone, what was it like?

Again, up to a certain point you can judge a man's mind and character by appearances. But appearances are notoriously deceptive. Can you ever actually see a man's character, or see what he is thinking while he is thinking it?

So we are brought to the important observation that a person is by his very nature invisible. This suggests that other persons besides man may function through other instruments of self-expression than human bodies. It is no more unlikely, on the face of it, that the universe itself may serve some person as our bodies serve us, than that our bodies should serve us as they do. Invisibility does not necessarily mean non-existence. On the contrary, the most significant things we know are invisible. For the most significant things we know are persons.

By using that adjective "significant" we have gone one step ahead of our argument. We have not yet considered whether there be any significance in anything, except so far as we read it into nature. Perhaps any inferences from our own experience, in which meaning and purpose admittedly have a primary place, to the universe beyond mankind, may be purely imaginary.

But there is no more reason for thinking so than for thinking the opposite. We cannot prove anything in this connection, one way or the other. Yet we cannot help thinking that all things do hang together in some kind of scheme, which has direction and therefore meaning, for our minds at least.

That is a sort of axiom, which has to be taken for granted. As a matter of fact we all do take it for granted in everything we undertake. It is not only careless living, in blind response to the vital urge of our organisms, which makes this assumption. Science in all its branches is grounded squarely upon it. And the farther science carries its researches along every line, the more confirmations nature yields for this axiom. Any one of us is at liberty, if he will, to maintain that life is at bottom a lamentable joke, and nothing is worth while. But against him will be such an overwhelming probability pointing in the other direction that most well-balanced people will regard it as yielding practical certainty. The man who stubbornly insists that the world is mere sound and fury, signifying nothing, is like the cadet whose mother said, as the battalion marched past, that her son was the only one in step.

Granting, then, that there is meaning in the idea of meaning as applied to nature other than human, why have we asserted that there is more meaning in personality than in anything else with which we are familiar? Because personality seems to be the end-product of all of nature's processes, so far as our observation reaches. Personality is the last word yet spoken in complexity, delicacy, strength, and range of outreach and influence.

Someone may suggest that we take this view simply because we ourselves are persons and that it is a sort of uncritical egotism to consider so small a being as man as if he were the crown of creation. What about the countless suns and other planets scattered throughout space, their distances from our earth measured in many instances by millions of light-years?

But who is it that knows about them, has calculated their probable number, measured the interstellar distances, and actually mapped the surface, analyzed the substance, and taken the temperature of many of them? Man, of course. And it is this very capacity for searching out the secrets of the boundless heavens, and including the whole of visible nature in the little brain-box that flowers on the stem of his spine, which warrants us in the objective judgment that man is more important than anything else or all other things combined. It is man's ability to render judgments like that, in which he forgets himself in what he sees and weighs, that shows man's preeminence.

There is something cheap and vulgar about the kind of thinking that compares the size of man's body with the size of the universe, and stops there overawed. Mere size is of little consequence. There are tons of coal to every ounce of diamonds in the earth. But you can keep the coal, if you will give me the diamonds. With diamonds enough I can get all the coal I want, and plenty of other things besides.

2.

If personality is the most significant thing in the world as we know it, what does it signify? In trying to answer that question, we must notice the important fact that it is nature which produces human beings. And if there is one truth which science would seem to have put beyond doubt, it is that the world is continuous throughout. One thing leads to another, without any break or any intrusion of an outside force. There is no place in modern thinking for any alien interference with nature's course. Man has an animal ancestry, which can be traced with hardly a gap right back to the amœba. Such gaps as there are

present no serious puzzle to scientific reconstruction. Nothing unnatural happened when man emerged from his animal ancestry.

This is the doctrine of evolution. It is not a guess, but an hypothesis—the only theory which satisfactorily accounts for all the known facts, and ties them together. As to how evolution goes forward, in detail, there are many differences of opinion among experts. Not argument, but further research, will eventually iron out the differences. If there be any truth in our conception of authority, the fact of evolution must be accepted, whatever its methods may have been. All the experts in the world are agreed in acknowledging it, and no man who is not an expert has any right to set up his own ideas against their verdict.

Man, then, as a person, is the end-product of nature. In him all that nature has been trying to do comes to its climax and fulfilment. He is not an accident, but an aim.

Even if he were an accident, it might tell us a good deal about the universe to know that an accident of such a quality could occur in it. But the emergence of man tells us a great deal more. For a stream never rises higher than its source, and figs do not grow on thistles. The fact that man is the goal of the universe up to this stage of its development can hardly mean less than that the universe itself is personal; that is, that persons or a person higher than man, and directing the ongoings of nature, has been aiming at this result.

If all the other arguments to establish the reality of God had to be abandoned, we should still believe in God because of what man is. For nothing less than personality in the whole can explain personality in any part. This,

then, is the significance we see in man: in the only sense in which proof is possible, apart from mathematics, the fact of man proves the being of God.

3.

We have been talking about God, but we have really come no farther than the alternative, "persons or a person higher than man." How do we come to the conclusion that there are not many gods?

By noting that there is only one universe. A universe is, as the name implies, a scheme or system in which all things hang together or cohere. No matter how many things there may be, they do all cohere in one universe. The same laws of nature hold good everywhere. That is not guesswork. It is one of the ascertained facts of science, and the greatest of them all. This uniformity of process leads us to infer unity of administration.

Such unity might conceivably be one of collaboration among a number of persons higher than man, and on an equal footing with one another. But it is a sound principle not to invent a plurality of causes when one will do. Scientists call that the principle of economy of supposition. So we suppose, on the only grounds available, that there is only one personal Being in control of nature, who exercises supreme authority. Other persons, higher than man and lower than the highest, there may well be. But one of them is at their head, and probably above them in nature as in office. That one sovereign Person it is whom we designate by the name "God."

4.

If we are agreed that God must be because man is, we are now ready to see whether the theory of His existence

fits the other facts known to us. What alternatives might be suggested to account for the world, if we left out the special problem set us by man's nature? And how does the idea of God stand up in comparison with them?

There have been men who advanced the notion that everything came to pass by accident. But there are evidences of design—that is, of pattern, fitting together, orderly process—everywhere. Such a thing as an accidental pattern is of course thinkable. But how many chances are there that such a pattern would result, compared with the simple and obvious explanation that someone made the pattern we see and is putting it together?

Try fitting the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle into one another properly just by shaking them up. Then carry the experiment one stage farther back. Try to make a jig-saw puzzle out of any bundle of chips you may happen to pick up, just by shaking them together, without any aid from your fingers. That will give you a rough idea of what it really means to say that the world, with all its intricacies of organization, function, color, and shape, interwoven as they are into an apparently consistent whole, is an accidental product—a "fortuitous concourse of atoms."

Another theory which has many advocates nowadays is that the world is an impersonal machine. A machine that made itself and runs itself. Now undoubtedly many aspects of the world do look machine-like. But who ever heard of a machine that runs itself? One thinks at once of perpetual motion machines. None of them has worked yet. But perhaps some day one of them will. Let us suppose so, anyway. Can we further suppose, however, that a successful perpetual motion machine will ever come into existence without an inventor to plan it, set it up,

and start it going? If anyone wants to think of the world as a machine, instead of as a living organism, there is nothing to stop him. But, unless he is crazy, he will have to put a machinist into his picture, too.

The trouble with all the alternatives to the idea of God is that they seem much more improbable than He does. They make such enormous drafts upon our gullibility that we have no funds on hand with which to honor them. The simplest, sanest way of explaining what we know beyond doubt—the only way, indeed, of meeting the most important facts—is by believing in God.

Whether or not He should be thought of as infinite, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, is not an inquiry which need detain us, provided we make our concept of Him at least big enough to take in the whole universe, with enough left over to account for His superiority. That in itself is a much bigger idea than we can ever quite get our minds around, without troubling about these still more expansive terms.

What He made the world of—whether of matter existing independently of Himself, which He found on hand, or by creating it out of nothing, or by objectifying His own thoughts—that is a question for philosophers rather than for theologians.

What His character must be, we shall have to ask later on.

But that He is, and that He is consistent in His methods and competent for His tasks—so much we may now regard as settled in our minds.

IV.

Drawing God to the Human Scale

I.

WE HAVE found reason to believe that there is one God only. Yet we say that different religions have worshiped different gods. Would it not be better to say that they have held different ideas about the one God? And, when several or many gods have been proclaimed by one religion, that these supposed persons have been in fact merely personifications of some of the one true God's supposed characteristics?

We may go farther, and add that there is probably some truth in every representation of God. Some truth may go along with much error and with faulty perspective. We should certainly refuse to brand all other religions than our own as unqualifiedly false. There are too many evidences of real insight into God's nature in some other systems of belief to warrant any such sweeping condemnation.

Nor need it worry us that God has been called by many different names. What if the Jews do call Him Jahve, and the Hindus Brahma, and the Muslims Allah? The word "God" is simply an English monosyllable, for which other tongues have other equivalents. It would never

occur to us to say that Christians who do not speak English are worshipers of false gods, because the Germans call God "Gott," the French "Dieu," the Spaniards "Dios." Provided the meaning is the same, variety in words is of no importance. We may even say that all religions which proclaim any god are proclaiming the one God, and aim at understanding Him, whether they succeed in less or greater degree.

I once worked for and with a great man for three years. It was a wonderful experience, for he is the best man I have ever known. But it would be hard to put what he is into words. A good many different descriptions of him would all be true. For he is a many-sided person. He does many things well. And there are as many aspects of his character as there are things that he does. How one will describe him depends upon how well and in what connection one knows him, and which side of him, or how many sides, one sees in consequence. He is an eminent orator. He is a man of wide-ranging and profound scholarship. He is an administrator of the first rank. He is a writer of distinction. He is the friendliest human being I have ever encountered. I have seen him terribly stern. I have seen him extraordinarily gentle. His speech is often spiced with gaiety and wit. How can one put all this into one description?

I have met many people who, instead of working with my chief for three years, have seen him on only one or two occasions. When they tell me what they think of him, I can usually recognize that what they say is true, as far as it goes, but that it is more or less out of focus. They do not know him as well as I do. I can even sympathize with them when they dislike him and uncon-

sciously misrepresent him. I can see how it came about. Nevertheless they are mistaken.

So it is with the many contrasting ideas which men have held about God. In an all-round view most of them would be found to be mutually supplementary instead of contradictory. Even when they are wrong, the error is comprehensible.

But we do need an all-round picture of God. Yet He is too vast for us to look at, all at once. If we attempt anything of the sort, we shall find ourselves dealing in a mere assortment of abstract terms like power and goodness. But we shall certainly be better able to enter into right relations with God—and that is the substance of religion—if we not only know what He is like in the abstract, but can also make a concrete picture of Him in our minds.

Such a picture must be drawn to a human scale, since the human scale establishes the limit of our clear understanding. It can hardly be on a less than human scale, since God is greater than we, not smaller. God and man are closely akin, at least at this point, that they are both persons. And God and man are the only persons in whose existence we have compelling cause to believe. So what could be more natural than to look about us among our fellow-men, to see whether some or any of them are enough like God to help us visualize Him?

On God's side, we should anticipate that He would be seeking and using the right kind of people to make His nature helpfully known on earth. For He is a person, and therefore may be expected to plan for whatever His creatures need and properly desire. We are not yet sure, however, what kind of people they are in whom we are

to look for the divine likeness. It is conventional to speak of the goodness of God. So one might reasonably expect to find His likeness in good people. But that is altogether too vague an expression. Someone asked Socrates one day, "What is good?" Quick as a flash came his answer, in the form of another question: "Good for what?" The father of philosophy was right in pointing out in this way that we need to think through what we mean by goodness, before we begin talking about it.

2.

So let us start, if we can, with a clean slate as to our opinion of God's character. Let us try to learn what He is like from what we know He must be doing. This much belongs by definition to our idea of God: He is always doing things. Whatever His building materials may have been, and wherever they came from, with them He has certainly been building a universe. And all that is going on today, as far as telescopes and microscopes can reach, shows that He has not yet finished it. Moreover, He is building it according to a plan, which He Himself must have drawn up. For He is the Mind of the universe. Each result He gets makes still further results possible. All these results bring the total development to a higher point, and work on the whole for its betterment.

There are waste and destruction on the way, as apparently there must be in every building process. And there is opposition which would obstruct His design and must be overthrown. Human persons often use the powers God has loaned them to balk His plans. But God is constructive. God is making things, not tearing them down. And the things He makes are useful.

Is not that exactly what we mean by goodness? Is not evil always directly or indirectly destructive, and good always directly or indirectly constructive? For an all-round picture of God we may look among the kind of people who get useful things done. They are the only people who seem to be keyed in with the harmony of God's creative nature. And that is the only kind of goodness which commands our respect.

3.

As a matter of fact, it is among people of that kind that men have always looked for what would help them understand God more clearly. That is why early tribes have usually deified their strong leaders. They have had powerful chieftains who strengthened the tribal organization and made it more secure. They have had wise lawgivers who improved the tribe in its internal relations. They have had competent executives who welded several tribes into one and founded dynasties. Such creative figures they have called by some such name as "sons of heaven," and have even offered divine honors before their thrones or at their tombs. These hero-kings were builders, not destroyers, at least from the viewpoint of their own subjects. So some likeness to the Supreme Builder was spontaneously recognized and reverenced in them.

But most hero-kings have been men of action principally, not of thought. And it did not take the human race long to observe that thought counts for more than action. Only the wise can make sound plans for permanent building, while any carpenter or bricklayer with energy and perseverance enough can carry them out. So presently the more discerning began to transfer their

homage from kings to sages or prophets, who thought out the problems of life in their deep and complex bearings, won their way through to dependable insight, and proclaimed their findings for the enlightenment of mankind, so that men might build the social structure of their interrelations along sane, durable, and beneficent lines. Divine honors came in turn to be paid to such men of constructive thought as, for instance, that forefather of sociologists, Confucius.

All this time, mankind was becoming more reflective, and human thought more refined. People were discovering their consciences in consequence. So the world came at length to set less store upon men who simply did things, or had clear and sensible ideas, and to pay more heed and yield more veneration to men who were strong and wise in themselves—men whose conduct exerted an upbuilding influence in the community—men who had the intrinsic worth of what we call nowadays character, whether or not any striking results of their behavior showed up in their lifetime.

Contributing to this shift from hero or king and sage or prophet to saint or priest—that is, to the man who brings those who know him nearer to God by the very quality of his own living—was the lengthening of racial memory beyond two or three generations to include centuries. When that at length occurred, a tentative forecast could be made for at least as far in the opposite direction, toward the future. The constructive power of personal influence is both increased and more readily recognized when memory and foresight cover a longer span.

So divine honors came to be paid at last to men who

were conspicuously and wonderfully good in themselves. The turn of such moral geniuses as Gautama the Buddha had come. Gautama's non-theistic doctrine was only incidental. It was inspired by his loathing for the corrupt and hideous pantheon of decadent Hinduism. It did not hold his followers back from an inconsistent but admirable and appropriate ascription to him of superhuman rank corresponding to his sublimity of character.

But if we could find a man who is at one and the same time saint, sage, and hero—priest, prophet, and king—he would fill out the proportions and details of an all-round picture of God better than anyone who is only one of three. His kingship must be seen in actual and outstanding improvements wrought in the civil and social order of mankind. His prophetic wisdom must be seen in teachings broad enough to fit every human situation under all changes of circumstance, and deep enough to reach beneath the intellect into the heart with sustaining and fortifying power. His holiness must be warm and radiant and without a flaw. Such a one would be in himself the very likeness we crave of the nature of God, brought down to the human scale and within the compass of our understanding.

4.

It is because I believe that the man Jesus, and he only, fulfils all these requirements, that I call myself a Christian, and try to follow him. I did not shape up the requirements to fit him. The requirements lie in the very nature of the case. But he does meet every one of them. He meets them better than any other leader of whom history tells.

That is not merely a Christian opinion. In recent decades, as his figure has been better known in most countries of all faiths, a chorus of witnesses has arisen spontaneously from all quarters, among the thoughtful and open-minded, testifying to Jesus' superiority over the other heroes of world-religion. Mahatma Gandhi's outspoken tributes to Jesus are a case in point. And in Christendom there are many unbelievers who nevertheless acclaim Jesus as the foremost master and exemplar of the art of right living. J. Middleton Murry's book, *Jesus, Man of Genius,* illustrates this typically as to content, and with exceptional beauty of expression.

Nor is it likely that any of whom history does not tell has ever measured up to Jesus' standard. For characters great in all their dimensions cannot help being celebrated. It is inevitable that those who tower far above others should be seen and remembered.

We are speaking, of course, of the man Jesus. He has been partially hidden from the eyes of many by clouds of adoration through which all that can be seen is the eternal Christ. But it is only by seeing his manhood clearly that we can understand why he should be called the Son of God. It is through his manhood, if at all, that we come to appreciate his godhead. So we have to study his manhood in all the phases of it which the four Gospels record. We can safely leave aside whatever in the records is puzzling or inconsistent, until we have mastered what is clear. In such a study we are to think of him only as a man, and as a man of his time. When we see him in that human light, we find——

No, let me speak just for myself. Don't take my word for it. I took no one's word for it, and had all the greater

reward and pleasure from what I found for having made the discovery on my own. Look for yourself and see. You will not see all the glory at first. Like a statue or a poem, the life of Jesus yields its full beauty and majesty only to long contemplation. Nevertheless beauty and majesty are in the work of art itself, and were put there by its maker. They are not figments of our fancy.

I find, then, first, that Jesus was interesting. Nobody ever told me that about him. I had to discover it for myself. He was an interesting young man. He was a more interesting young man than Alexander or Napoleon or Keats; and that is saying a good deal. As a thinker, he went deep and brought up fresh truth, and truth of the highest order. Probably he had never heard of Plato; and the Sermon on the Mount is in Matthew's Gospel, the most Hebraic of the four, without any slightest tinge of Greek influence. Yet the underlying ideas of the Sermon on the Mount are Platonic plus. He was a shrewder judge of men, and a kinder friend to all and sundry, whether they had any claim on him or not, than any other man I have ever heard of. He was clean and consistent in his personal life. The men who were first to worship his holiness were they who had been living with him, twenty-four hours a day, for many months. And he disclosed a new kind of strength, mightier than swords and guns—conquest by self-sacrifice for truth and the right.

All this is interesting, and more. It commands our respect and devotion. His figure, in short, is unimaginably perfect and attractive in every trait of manhood. We could never have imagined just this sort of perfection, if we had never seen it. Yet, having seen it, we recognize

it as perfection itself, the very fulfilment and completion which human nature is always seeking.

If Jesus were an imaginary figure, the seer who dreamed this ideal person would be the most sublime poet in literature. For every single trait in the portrait of Jesus precedent can be found. But for his traits collectively, in just this surprising proportion and with just this unique accent, there is no precedent anywhere. To have spun these varied strands from fancy and woven them into such a unity would be a greater feat than to write any poem or compose any symphony yet known to men.

But who could this supreme artist have been? Not Paul, not Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. We know how limited and dull their imaginations were, from the way they often manifestly miss the point of the very words and deeds they record. And that there should have been some towering genius behind these reporters and inspiring them, other than Jesus himself, yet leaving no trace or rumor whatever of his existence, makes a far heavier demand on our credit than to accept the simple fact that Jesus did live, and lived substantially as these stories represent him. So we may be sure that he lived. And his life was such that it gives us an all-round satisfying picture of God to say that Jesus was like God, so God must be like Jesus.

5.

That, of course, is the kernel of Christian faith. As a shell to protect it, the Church proclaims him to be of the same nature with God—very God of very God. No competent theologian of the Church has ever denied, or intentionally diminished, the fact that Jesus was actually

a man, in the fullest sense of the word. But to explain and safeguard its recognition of his unique character as a man, and the unique significance of that character as a key to the character of God, the Church has adopted the dogma of the Holy Trinity.

A dogma is an official teaching, intended to account for some element in the original simple teaching of Christianity, which is called doctrine. The dogma of the Trinity is to the effect that there are three persons in one God —Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—God creative and sovereign; God manifest as the Friend of mankind in Christ; God working through mankind by His Spirit and its persuasions. It declares that these three are not mere temporal phases of divine activity, but essential differentiations in the divine nature; yet that the three are not three gods, but one God, always in harmony within Himself.

According to this dogma, Jesus lived before his birth on earth, being without beginning like his Father; and he lives today. He not only lives as all the dead are living, if there be immortality. He is also everywhere present and potent, sharing God's attributes, as the comrade and deliverer of those who trust in him—as the personal principle of deliverance through trust in higher reality, and devotion to it, by whatever name a man may call that higher reality.

That dogma, to be sure, is incomprehensible. That is, we cannot make a diagram of what it stands for. And there is a sense in which we cannot be said to comprehend anything, unless we diagram it. But that is no argument against it. Many of the formulæ of science, as every student of physics knows, are equally incapable of graphic representation, and so defy our imaginations. Yet we

keep on using them for quite prosaic practical purposes. We are convinced that they must be true, because they do the work that is expected of them, while nothing else would do it.

From the viewpoint of a believer in the dogma of the Holy Trinity, that analogy holds for this formula, too. It is not more surprising than the life of Jesus, of which it purports to explain the derivation and meaning. It is unique, but so is his life. No other theory has ever been advanced which explains him so well, and explains all that we know of him. It is easy to explain most of him in simple ways; but something is always left out. And no theory fits the facts unless it fits them all.

If we accept this dogma, moreover, there are various parallels in human experience which help us to see its reasonableness. Man's nature, for example, is also in three coordinate parts—intellect, feeling, will. But that is another story. And it is not a story we have to tell. I myself accept the Church's official teaching on this subject. No other way of looking at Jesus seems to meet my mind's demand for an answer to the question what such a life as this means. But I have no quarrel with anyone who disagrees with me about it. It is beside the point for the practical purposes of religion. And it is a stumbling-block to many who are far better Christians than I. Certainly to know God the Father is all we need, since the very dogma of the Trinity declares that the fulness of the Godhead is in Him, as indeed in each of the three divine persons.

The point that really counts is that Jesus gives us the all-round picture of God which we started out to look for. He is the only expert in religion who does so to our

complete satisfaction, though other experts, working independently of him, have had much to say that is true about the one God of the whole world, who is the same everywhere and always, though He be called by many names.

Jesus was like God, through and through. So God is like Jesus. We can trust what Jesus tells us about God, because he proved, by the way he lived, that he thoroughly understood Him. We have found the one guide we need. And religion true to his spirit, purified of its errors, and carried to the highest possible point of development, will be the one adequate religion for all men.

V.

Scriptures and Truth

1.

THE story of Jesus is told in the New Testament. It might seem that we could narrow it down more closely, and say that the story of Jesus is told in the four Gospels. That is true, as to direct telling of the story. But each of the other books in the New Testament supplements the Gospel accounts by reflecting some phase of the understanding of Jesus by his early followers.

Some of the letters of Paul, moreover, are of even more striking importance in one vital regard than the Gospels. They certify to us that Jesus really did live, bringing external evidence to buttress the internal evidence of the Gospels themselves.

One element of this internal evidence we have already mentioned. We have noted how unbelievable it is that such a story as the Gospels tell should ever have been told, if the substance of the story were not true.

But historians have also to take into consideration the fact that the four Gospels were written by men who are otherwise unknown to us. We have to admit that there is nothing but hearsay to warrant the claim that these books are from the pens of the men whose names they

bear, though we are fairly sure of Mark and Luke. Even if there were full warrant in all four cases, Mark and the rest of them are unknown to us outside of the New Testament.

Further, there are very few references to Jesus in the secular literature of his time or the following generation which are not open to suspicion as to their genuineness. From such as there are we should not be able to learn enough about him even to be wholly sure that they do in fact refer to the Jesus of the Gospels. This, however, is not surprising. For even events of great local moment to people in Palestine were hardly likely to be reported at Rome. Palestine was about as far then from the center of world civilization, measured by the length of time it took to travel between them, as Manila is from Washington today.

But the matter stands differently with Paul. Paul traveled everywhere throughout the Roman Empire. And wherever he went, two things usually happened. He got a hearing before prominent people. And he got into trouble with the authorities because of what he said. So he became one of the best known figures in history. The records of his day are as voluminous with reference to Paul as they are scanty about Jesus.

Paul's principal letters, now included in the New Testament, were written before any of the Gospels. In them he bears testimony over and over again to the human life of Jesus. He even gives us details which no one else has reported, in spite of the fact that his chief interest is in Jesus' divine estate and office as the Messiah. "Messiah" is a Hebrew term which in Greek becomes "Christ" —the "Anointed One" or King and Saviour of the world,

who had been foreshadowed in the hopes of earlier Hebrew religious leaders.

One item of Paul's testimony does away entirely with any notion we might have that Jesus was an imaginary person, the mere personification of an ideal. For Paul talks about the fact that Jesus died on a cross. He not only talks about it, but wrestles with it, and wrests from it a strange theory of substitutionary atonement. But the Cross was obviously a hateful fact to Paul, at first. Naturally it would be. For to be executed in that way was supposed to bring lasting disgrace. It was the most degrading punishment known. The Jews, in particular, had an almost superstitious horror of it. Death on a cross is something which neither Paul nor any other sane Jew could conceivably have invented for an imaginary religious hero.

Thus Paul's evidence is conclusive that Jesus really did live, and is the only satisfactory evidence we have from the standpoint of scientific history.

2.

The New Testament as a whole is a collection of early Christian writings, selected by the Church from a much larger list. The basis of choice was nominally apostolic authorship; the books to be included in this collection must have been written by one of the original disciples or Paul. But the ways and means of applying such a test at that time, in comparison with our searching modern methods, were hardly of a sort to inspire confidence. A good many mistakes were undoubtedly made.

The actual basis of choice, however, was a much sounder one. It was that the writings selected must be

thoroughly in line with the most assured memories concerning Jesus which had been handed down by word of mouth in the Church from eye-witnesses of his life. The way this standard worked was that harmony with truth, as it was generally remembered among Christians, was taken to indicate apostolic authorship. On this basis it is doubtful whether any serious mistakes at all were made, though the Church hesitated a great while before placing its sanction on the Book of the Revelation.

The New Testament does not stand alone. It is organically though distantly related to the Old Testament. The relationship is distant, because several centuries elapsed between the Old Testament and the New. In that period some of the tenets of Hebrew religion were amplified in directions hardly foreshadowed in earlier times, and came to be generally accepted in these new forms. But Jesus was a Jew. He started out as a loyal son of the Hebrew faith, orthodox in the main, to reform abuses and misconceptions which were debasing religious practice among his countrymen. The Old Testament was the background of his thinking.

Jesus was distinctly a man of his own race, place, and time, with all the natural limitations which that implies. Yet he was able to rise above those limitations and become a sort of universal Man, and the clearest, wisest teacher for all times and races and places that mankind has ever known. Sometimes one hears critics mention the fact that Jesus was a first century Palestinian Jew, as if somehow that discounted his significance for the world. But if a man is to be a man, he has to be a man of some one given race, place, and time. It is only within that framework of definite association that full personality can

be achieved. All great men have belonged to their own circle first, and have proved their greatness and wider importance by their manner of living in that restricted circle. Shakespeare was wholly an Elizabethan Englishman, and Dante a mediæval Florentine; both are universal poets.

The Old Testament is a collection of writings on religious and national subjects by members of the Hebrew race and Church. Church and state were in effect identical through most of the course of Hebrew history. These writings also were selected out of many. The ground of this choice was their accord with the main principles of Hebrew faith in its long evolution out of primitive tribal religion into a magnificent doctrine of the one God of the universe.

The Hebrews were the first to see God under the dominant aspect of His righteousness. Often they confused goodness in men with mere obedience to laws arbitrarily handed down from on high. But usually their minds were clear as to the essential goodness of God, and what it meant. Theirs was an ethical concept of God, in contrast with the philosophical concepts of ancient India and Greece, which lacked all effective emphasis upon divine righteousness.

This ethical accent was due chiefly to the influence of the prophets. The main business of the prophets was not to foretell, but to tell forth. They were Heaven's spokesmen to their people and the earth. They were not soothsayers, but preachers. They were not usually priests. Indeed, they were, more often than not, outspokenly opposed to the priesthood, who tended to substitute form and ceremony for moral earnestness and religious vitality.

It is the prophets whose teachings form the nucleus of

the Old Testament, as the life of Jesus is the nucleus of the New. Jesus was the last and greatest of the prophets of the old Hebrew dispensation or "testament," founded upon Moses' initiative. He was also the first and greatest of the prophets of the new dispensation. This dispensation follows out Jesus' initiative in extending the benefits of the loftiest and purest faith mankind has known, beyond Hebrew limits to all who will receive it.

3.

The Old Testament and the New together make up the Bible. The Bible is thus a library of the source documents of the Christian religion. The most valuable contribution it makes to us is our knowledge of the Christ, his life, character, and teachings. That contribution is literally invaluable, if we have interpreted Jesus' significance rightly. But that is not the only religious value in the Bible. For prophets like Hosea and Jeremiah in the Old Testament and preachers like Paul in the New, not to mention many others, were themselves men of original religious insight, experts in this field, of like kind to Jesus, though of lesser degree. The Bible is the record over a long period of the richest religious life of which we have any knowledge.

This does not mean that the sacred writings of other religions are without worth or truth. No one who knows anything about them at first hand could possibly hold so unappreciative a view. In the scriptures of Hinduism, for example, there is much that would compare favorably with any passage of prophecy—or, as we should say today, with any printed sermon—in the Old Testament, and which quite outdistances such books as Esther, the Song of

Solomon, and Ecclesiastes, to which it is hard for any honest and informed student to attribute any religious worth whatever.

Similar comparisons could be made involving the holy books of other great religions, probably on no less favorable terms. But there is, on the whole, more continuous elevation and on the other hand less that is objectionable in the Bible, even apart from the Gospels, than in any other of these compilations. And the Gospels are in a class by themselves. Jesus has no peers. His presence in it, as the outcome and climax of all its noblest aspirations and insights, lifts the whole Bible to a plane which no other scriptures have approached.

This should not lead us to assume that no writings since the Bible was completed are entitled to our reverence as great religious documents. Perhaps one could compile a second Bible from the writings of the saints and seers of Christendom after the days of Jesus and right down to our time, from which no essential value of the first Bible would be omitted, and which would be easier than the first for us to read and understand, because it would be nearer to our ways of thinking.

If such a Bible were compiled, however, it would be secondary, where this Bible that we already have is primary. Its ideas could all be traced back to sources, suggestions, or analogies in the earlier collection. The Bible as we know it stands alone, not because it is always more true or more beautiful than other writings, but because it was the first to give us the greatest of religious truths—what manner of man Jesus was, and that God is like Jesus. Upon that truth we may elaborate all we please. But

not even the greatest seer of all the ages following Jesus has been able to improve upon it.

To insure that the Bible shall always be held at its full worth, certain theories have been advanced about it which strike the modern mind as strange. It has been claimed that the Bible is literally and exactly the Word of God. All the men who wrote its various parts have been credited with being so divinely inspired that they could not make any mistakes, even on the most trivial matters. It has also been alleged that, taken altogether, these writings constitute a full and accurate revelation from God on every subject touched upon in them.

These theories of inspiration and revelation we have here stated in their extreme form. Current modifications of them have been reluctantly made by their defenders. They have given in inch by inch because they had to, against their wills. These theories have sometimes received so much emphasis as to be regarded as the very touchstone of true Christian faith. If one did not accept them, it was even asserted, one could not be a real Christian, however truly one tried to follow Jesus.

The first comment we have to make on this view must be a protest against the grave misrepresentation of Jesus' own mind which it involves. The Gospels make it clear that he applied no such hard and fast test to his would-be followers. He welcomed them if they believed in him and wanted him for a friend. He never inquired whether they believed even the most important truths about him, if they were of such a nature as not to be obvious to every open-minded observer. There were no creedal barriers to his fellowship. He and his disciples, moreover, could

hardly have believed in the Bible as we have it, or asked anyone else to do so, for the New Testament had yet to be written.

Second, the Bible makes no such extravagant claim for itself. To be sure, many of the prophecies begin with the introductory phrase, "The word of Jahve which came to" So-and-so. And the Book of the Revelation, which happens, by an accident of arrangement, to stand at the very end of the Bible as we have it, contains some menacing phrases about adding to or subtracting from this book. What is meant is naturally the Book of the Revelation itself and alone. But its present position invites the unreflective to suppose that the whole Bible is meant. Certainly the books of the Bible do not themselves claim in general to be proof against mistake.

Third, misstatements regarding historical items are of fairly frequent occurrence in the Bible, as every careful student knows. The same incident is sometimes told in different ways, with contradictions in some details, in different parts of the Bible. A mine of illustrative instances on this point can be unearthed by comparing the Books of the Kings with the Books of the Chronicles. Moreover, the passages dealing with scientific matters cannot by any sleight-of-hand always be made to agree with the truth as science reveals it through irresistible proof, step by step, in its diggings, delvings, and experiments in the earth and the elements. If God made the world, did He not write the story which scientists decipher from the rocks? I would rather trust His word in His own handwriting there, so to speak, than any message through a stenographer.

Fourth, the New Testament itself says nothing about

any Word of God, of the more intimate sort which makes His very character known, save Jesus. Judging by the faith of the Church in the earliest generations, nearest to the Master's own personal influence, the true Christian position is that the Word of God is Jesus, not the Bible. The Bible stands first among all books in the Christian's affection and reverence, simply because it is the echo of that one sufficient and gracious Word.

The extreme theories of inspiration and revelation seem to have been invented by overzealous people who were afraid that the Bible could not stand on its own feet, but needed to be propped up. Of course, inspiration and revelation have other meanings, into which there is no call for us to go here. If, however, they were allowed to bear some of the meanings often proposed for them, the Bible would cease to be a natural book, convincing and enlightening in its own right, and by its own inherent power, grounded in evident truth, which the minds of men recognize, and to which their hearts respond. Instead, it would become for us an unnatural book. It would arouse suspicion by its apparent artificiality, instead of carrying conviction by its palpable sincerity and the wonderful story it tells. We can get along better without these theories than with them, if we will take pains to acquaint ourselves with the Bible at first hand and search out its actual values for ourselves.

Every intelligent person needs to read the Bible, as a part of his education. For it is a great body of ancient literature of high quality, even if it were no more than that. It is one of the three sources of European culture, along with our heritages from Greece and Rome. Moreover, it presents cases analogous to most of the puzzling

situations which we confront in the modern world, but in simplified form, revealing their structural principles without confusion of detail. It represents the most penetrating moral insight and the most elevated religious ascent of the human spirit thus far. And above all it is the shrine of Jesus. In its pages we find him who shows us what God is like, and what life must mean because it comes from such a God.

VI.
God and Our World

I.

GOD is like Jesus. That tells us all we need to know about His character. But it does not describe His constitution. By the constitution of God we mean three things: first, His organic nature; second, the way in which He is related continuously to the world; third, His characteristic attitude toward the persons He has created.

What God is in His own nature is the question which the dogma of the Holy Trinity was worked out to answer, following various suggestions in the New Testament. That dogma we have already considered. It has this prime recommendation to our minds, that it allows for a complexity in the nature of God corresponding to the complexity we discover in ourselves. Personality is never simple. It is always, so far as we can see, a delicate balance and intricate interplay of distinct elements closely coordinated.

Next, we have to ask how we are to think of God's relationship to the universe. It is clear that no answer can be wholly adequate. For we are now dealing with a subject so great that our intelligence is unable to grasp it in its entirety. Whatever position we adopt, we must re-

member that, if we knew all, there would be much more to be said. The best we can do is to draw several pictures based on analogies in human experience, and select from them the picture which seems most satisfactorily to meet the terms of our problem.

The first and simplest suggestion which will occur to us is that God, who made the world and runs it, is like a workman standing beside a machine. That offers an obvious parallel to what God's attitude might be toward His creation, except for two objections. First, no given machine is essential to a workman. Second, a workman does not have to stay beside his machine. He can walk away when he chooses. There is no guarantee that he will always be within call if anything goes wrong.

But we cannot help feeling that God must be closer to the world than that. He may not be part of the world. In fact, if He were, the world would be greater than He is. But at least the world must be part of Him. It must be so attached to Him, and He must be so involved in it, that He could not conceivably go away and leave it. Nothing less than that can satisfy reason or religious feeling.

There is a machine, however, which is part of the man to whom it belongs. That machine is the body. Each of us is the life and mind of his body, and life and mind are the first requisites for personality. We may think of God as the life and mind of the universe, after exactly the same fashion. If that is true, then every part of the world will be as near to Him as any other, and He will feel whatever goes on anywhere. Every part of my body is part of me on an equal footing with every other; to bruise my knee will hurt me as much as to bruise my hand or my head. This picture meets our requirement that we

represent God's relation to all things in such a way as to explain His unfailing presence, power, and care everywhere.

Now things sometimes happen to our bodies which we would prevent if we could. Our capacity to control their condition is limited, and local irritations or poisons may injure them in ways we should never permit if we could help it. But we have a power of recuperation, which rushes up all the health-making resources of the organism to fight harmful germs or to repair damages. In the practice of medicine the main point is to give nature's own healing processes a chance, and back them up. If the analogy we have just drawn holds good, then we can imagine how evils come about in the world, and can understand, too, that God does not choose them, but that He does everything He can to offset them, and because of His nature can be counted on to overcome them in the long run.

There are, of course, other persons in the world besides God. There are human beings. And there may be other beings, too, for all we know, lower than God but higher than man. There may be such persons as angels. If our analogy is right so far, these persons other than God are responsible for any unhealthy state of the universe, like germs in our bodies. Perhaps the objection will be raised to the picture of God related to the universe as a man to his body, that there are no subordinate persons within a human person, while such persons do exist in God's realm. Nevertheless the analogy holds fairly well, since the body is made up of living cells, each with a life of its own.

2.

Let us see, however, if any other picture can be found which will supplement and correct the conclusion we have provisionally adopted.

Immediately there comes to my thought the relation between the federal union of the American republic and some of the states. Not the original states; for they existed before the union. If the world existed before God, and the world made Him as the thirteen states made the union, then He is either dependent in some sense on the world, or He is merely a subjective being, without any real existence at all—a construct of the human mind.

But the God in whom we have found reason to believe is He who constructed the human mind. So the states we must think of in this connection are the states made by the union after it had been set up. Some of these states were carved out of the Northwest Territory. Others were made out of lands acquired later, at first owned directly by the republic, but subsequently shared out among the people who had settled in them, and chartered as independent bodies politic within the republic, on an equal footing with the thirteen original states. Historians assert that it was this voluntary creative activity of the American republic which first made it conscious of itself as a strong nation, in place of the mere close federation it had been.

My boyhood home was in one of these created states, Minnesota. In Minnesota there are many counties, and in Minnesota's counties there are many towns. But America is in Minnesota, so to speak. And America and Minnesota are in every county. And America and Minnesota and the county are in every town. Here we have one

supreme entity, and three successive orders of subordinate political entities. The greater is inclusive of the lesser. Its law has priority over all lesser laws. Yet the laws of the lesser entities have full right, so far as they do not conflict with the laws of any higher jurisdiction.

Is not this a graphic illustration of what God's relation to the world must be, if we substitute grades of person for grades of political entity? When one thinks out the implications of this analogy, inadequate though it doubtless is to the whole truth, they explain a good many points which have probably puzzled us in the divine administration of the universe.

3.

So much for the way in which God is related day by day to the world. Now for His personal bearing toward the persons He has created. We started out by saying that in character God is like Jesus. If so, God's attitude toward men is one of good-will and practical kindness.

But in what personal relation does God exercise His benevolence? Perhaps we had better see how far our own thinking will carry us, before turning to Jesus for his view of the matter. For the gospel takes common human intelligence for granted, and builds on it as the foundation of higher truth. It goes beyond reason and conscience, but it never goes against them. It travels with them as far as they go.

First, then, and most popular and widespread, we have the king-and-subject concept of God's personal relation to mankind. He is Lord, and we are His servants. His word is law, and we must obey.

Now that is a good beginning. There can be no disput-

ing God's right to rule. Much depends, however, on the direction we choose when we start out from this idea. Two notions especially have often prevailed, on this basis, which have wrought a great deal of mischief.

One of these misleading assumptions is that God is an irresponsible autocrat, and that what makes a thing right is that God wills it. But God is not irresponsible; He is responsible to Himself. It is not His willing a thing that makes it right; it is the fact that it is right that makes Him will it.

The other wrong assumption is that God, like many earthly kings, cares first about law-enforcement, not the welfare of His people, so that His severity in punishment of disobedience will be proportioned to His unique power. It is this notion which has led to the magnifying of fear as a motive for seeking God's favor. But it is hard to see what use even God could have for people who can be frightened into being good, and who are good only on that account. Certainly such people make the worst sort of citizens and subjects in any earthly state.

But the king-idea, applied to God, does render one distinct service. It puts forcibly the consideration that, by the necessity of His very nature and ours, God must be a sovereign, not the president of a republic. What tells against monarchy as a just form of government among men is that most princes are bad, or weak, or selfish, or careless, and all of them are liable to error. If a dictator could be found who never made mistakes, and who had uniformly good intentions and the strength to see them through, no democrat could desire anything better. There would be plenty of room for individual freedom and initiative under his jurisdiction. Democracy is better than

unjust tyranny. But the reign of a thoroughly wise and benevolent sovereign would be better still. That kind of kingdom would in fact be a commonwealth. God is that kind of king.

Yet God must be more than king. For He made His subjects and the world in which they live. There must be the pride and affection of an artisan for his handiwork, and more, in God's feeling for the vast realm He governs. But what order of creator is He, if, as we have seen, the universe is not casually but organically connected with Him, a part of His own being?

The next word that comes to our minds is the very word Jesus spoke, and upon which he laid such emphasis as it had never received before. God is our Father. His personal bearing toward all other persons is indicated by that term. Others had spoken the word before Jesus. But none had given it so wide an application as he did, or had made it so prominent. He made it clear that God was the Father, not of some special race or class only, but of everyone. And he made that idea the keynote of religion, in the new and higher form in which he taught and practiced it. He sounded that keynote in the very first phrase of the model prayer which he supplied for his disciples. He bade them say to God, "Our Father."

The clearest and most succinct exposition of this prime principle of the Christian world-view is found in what we strangely call the Parable of the Prodigal Son (St. Luke 15:11-32). It is not really the story of the prodigal, but of his father. There is nothing remarkable about the son. He was just like any other wastrel, sowing wild oats, going to the dogs, and coming home for help when he had got to the end of his rope. But the father is the

most remarkable figure in literature, except Jesus himself, whose character he so evidently reflects. The more one studies the story, the more one sees in it, and the more clearly one gathers what God must be like in His dealings with His children. For Jesus intended this father to stand for God.

There is no need to interpret the parable at length. It speaks for itself. But let us notice the high lights.

First, the father was unmistakably the head of his household. His sanction was required for all domestic arrangements, and everything else that went on. Nothing that happened in the case of either son lessened the father's dignity or authority in any degree.

But, second, the father respected the rights of his grown children. If one of his sons wanted to leave home, and the other preferred to stay behind, that was their own business. They were entitled to do as they pleased. Their father would not force his will on them, nor would he withhold the means they required. He had brought them up to stand on their own feet. When the time came for them to do so, he was not disposed to interfere.

Third, he was impartial. He did not love the elder son more than the younger, because he stayed at home. He did not love the younger more than the elder, because he was independent enough to insist on having his fling. Of course they were treated differently. But that was by their own choosing. The son who remained naturally enjoyed the comforts of home. The son who left naturally had to provide for his own shelter and nourishment. When the son who left got tired of living in pigsties and eating corn-husks, and came back again, he found that his home was still there, and as open to him as it had ever

been. When his brother showed himself irritated by the welcome the returning prodigal received, which was exactly as warm as if nothing regrettable had happened except the separation, the father of them both reminded his elder son of the advantages he had enjoyed by staying at home, and of the tie that bound them both to the younger. He took so admirably equable a tone that he must have put to shame the man who complained. There was no playing favorites in that household.

Fourth, the father was too big-hearted, and too well established in his own integrity, to feel pique when the prodigal set forth, or humiliation when he came back in rags. He was not thinking of himself, but of his boy. If and whenever his boy wanted to come home—never mind his reasons, which certainly in the event did him no credit—he would find his father's arms open, his father's love unchanged and overflowing, and his own room ready for him. He could even indulge the luxury of forgetting the ugly things he had been through. For, so far as his father was concerned, it was as if he had never been away.

Fifth, this father was educating his two sons, even in their manhood, by letting them see the mistakes they made —vice in one case, mean-heartedness in the other—in comparison with his own constancy in dignity and affection—the two traits tempering each other. Like any good teacher, he trusted to persuasion for results, and knew that there was no need to point out the lesson.

So from this parable we learn Jesus' idea of God in relation to mankind. It completes our own thoughts on the subject, and is the logical fulfilment of them. The word of the expert whom we are following is sustained

by our own reasoning, so that his authority stands doubly assured. God is not outside us, and never far away; we are a part of Him, like the hand of the body, or a state of the union. And God is not only our Creator and King; He is our Father. It is in terms of this fatherly relation that we must try to understand His government of the world. And it is in terms of our filial relation to Him that we must try to understand ourselves and our duty.

VII.
Man and Freedom

I.

WE HAVE had a good deal to say already about personality. But one outstanding element in it we have postponed for separate treatment. This is self-determination, or free will.

We can best approach this subject by observing free will on the grand scale, in God. To do so is like looking at a magnified drawing of some object, like a living cell, which is too minute in itself to allow us to see the details on the scale of nature.

When we say that God made the world, we must suppose that He did so because He wanted to. Doubtless there were reasons why He made it as it is, instead of on some other model. But, whatever those reasons may have been, they were reasons which He Himself appreciated. He followed them by His own choice. He might have done otherwise, if He had cared to. So He was governing His own action, and building a universe in the way He preferred, without any outside dictation.

He was behaving as the federal union behaved when it made my home state of Minnesota. To be sure, there is this difference, that the republic was dealing with a given

territory and population, while God made His population to His own order, so to speak, and the territory for them to occupy. Nevertheless the cases are similar, in that the republic moved along lines which it chose freely, in organizing and establishing the new state.

There was nothing except its own judgment to prevent the republic from inventing some new form of government for the area and people for which it was then providing orderly institutions. It might, for instance, have anticipated history, and given Minnesota a status something like that of the Philippines today, self-governing in local affairs, but under a Governor General sent out from Washington, and without representation in the Congress.

The federal union followed instead the well-tested precedent of setting up a state equal in standing to any other state in the federation. This step was taken because, on the whole, it seemed the best step to take. But it was also taken because the republic wanted to carry on along a definitely established line instead of experimenting. There was nothing to prevent experimentation, if that had seemed to be a more desirable policy.

In the same way, God made the world as He did because that was how He wanted to make it. He could do as He pleased, and He did as He pleased. He was free. Incidentally, the fact that God did freely make the world as it is ought to make us less rebellious against the general scheme of things than we are inclined sometimes to be. If we know anything about God, we know that He is good, and that we can trust Him to do the best He can. If this world, with all its seeming faults, is the best God could do, then it cannot be so bad as we think it in moments of discouragement.

And there must be some sound reason why it is no better than it is. Perhaps it is going to be better. Perhaps a world without hazards would not be a world in which personality could develop. Perhaps the worst things that happen in the world are due to misconduct on the part of other free agents than God, to whom He gave their freedom because character can only be produced by and in free beings, even though they may sadly abuse their privileges before they learn to us them rightly.

2.

But we must not forget that we know how to talk this language of freedom, and to see free will on the grand scale in God, only because we know in our own experience what freedom is. We do not have to; but we can if we will. That is a very simple statement of the meaning of free will. We may argue about it all we want to; but no amount of argument will in any degree lessen our vital conviction that it is true: we can if we will, but we need not if we will not.

By a vital conviction we mean a certainty which comes out in our action, in spite of ourselves. We may doubt or deny our free will, on intellectual grounds and in debate. But our very debating illustrates the freedom which we call in question. For nothing makes us argue about it. We know perfectly well that we could keep still if we chose. And we should certainly not waste our breath if our common sense did not tell us that the people to whom we expound our objections to the idea of self-determination are capable of accepting our viewpoint. In other words, we acknowledge that they are free by the very act of trying to prove to them that they are not.

It is pretty hard not to take a vital conviction like that at its face value. Yet there are several strong arguments which are often advanced against it.

The first is theological. It starts with the assertion that God is all-powerful. It seems to follow from that premise that man has no power at all. Man is just a mechanical toy, a sort of dancing doll in God's hands.

That sounds reasonable enough. But it flatly contradicts what we cannot help knowing to be true. And it makes God directly responsible for all the evil that men do. No doubt, on any account of the matter, He is indirectly responsible for it, just as the prodigal's father was indirectly responsible for his son's downfall because he let him go, and gave him money for his traveling expenses. But no blame or guilt is incurred by such responsibility. Indeed, we honor the father for respecting his son's individuality, despite the trouble that came of it. It is quite another thing to suggest that the prodigal was doing exactly what his father wanted him to do, all the time he was away; that he had really no choice in the matter, because his father made him go wrong.

When consequences like that follow inevitably from the first proposition of an argument, there is nothing left to do but to look for the flaw in the first proposition. And the claim that God is and forever continues in sole exercise of all power is an easy mark for criticism. Doubtless He is all-powerful in the sense that all power comes from Him in the first place; that any power derived from Him will be finally defeated if it is misused; and that, in the outcome of the world-process, all the wills He has created will by their own choice yield to His persuasions and accept His control.

But to assert God's power to the exclusion of any and all freedom in His offspring simply does not make sense. Great systems of theology have been based on this supposition, notably those of St. Augustine and John Calvin. But, with all due respect for the intellectual grasp, logical consistency, and sincerity of such teachers, we have to conclude that the notion of omnipotence which they accepted is nothing more or less than a huge and ugly shadow, cast by human imagination rather than by any corresponding reality behind it.

The second argument against free will is based on logic. It is said that a man acts on his own preference, to be sure, but that his preferences can all be traced without remainder to urges in his own nature, and to influences which play upon his mind, from other minds about him, and from his circumstances; in other words, to heredity and environment. He has certain feelings. He may think that he sorts them out, exalting some of them and suppressing others, at his own pleasure. But the very sorting process is set up and carried through by his feelings themselves, over which he has no control. So also with his beliefs. A man cannot choose what he will believe; his intellect is coerced by the available evidence. And his conduct is the resultant of these converging forces of his feelings and his beliefs. Therefore his freedom is a delusion, a mere dressing-up of the fact that he is a separate center of consciousness into a misleading semblance of capacity for original action.

Now all that is perfectly logical. In fact, the logic is so inescapable that in my college days I used to ridicule anyone who stood out against it. It is the prerogative of students, jealously limited by Providence to a very few

years of their young lives, to be certain of everything, especially on the points at which they disagree with older people. But since I have grown older, it has occurred to me to wonder whether logic can be altogether trusted. Certainly it lands us in some strange muddles.

Take the case of self-consciousness, for instance, of which self-determination is a phase. To put the fact of the case in the briefest possible form, let me say that I know me. Immediately the logician springs up to refute me triumphantly. "'I know me'? How absurd! The I and the me are the same self. The same self cannot be both subject and object at the same time. It isn't logical!" Of course it isn't. And yet there it is. That very doubling or splitting of the self, which logic is utterly unable to comprehend, is exactly what does occur. It is I who do the thinking when I think about myself—I, and no other. It is about myself that I think when I think about myself—myself and no other. If logic cannot comprehend that, then so much the worse for logic. The experience is true, just the same.

So it is also with the freedom of the will. After logic has explained it away, there is no remainder that logic can find. But we have no difficulty in finding it. Indeed our only difficulty, and it is an insuperable one, is in trying to forget it.

The man who declares that nothing can exist which logic cannot explain, is called a rationalist. In the interest of his theory he will deny some of the things he most evidently knows. The man who regards logic as a useful tool as far as it can serve, but who admits all the facts of life about which he has a vital conviction, whether

logic can explain them or not, is called a realist. I take my stand with the realists, because I have too much respect for truth to stand anywhere else.

The third argument against free will is scientific. Science, we are told, discovers natural laws, or habitual and unvarying principles of behavior, which run all the way up and down the gamut of nature from the electron to the farthest stars, and which apply to everything, human nature included. There is one continuous chain of cause and effect throughout the universe. Behind every effect is a cause, which in its turn is the effect of some other cause, and so on. So free will, since it implies action which is uncaused in this sense, simply cannot be true.

But scientists are getting a little less dogmatic of late. As we have seen, some of them are looking into the presuppositions of the scientific method, and finding that they are not as closed to all question as they had thought. Some of them have been watching the unscheduled jumps of the quantum of energy, and wondering whether this observation does not introduce a "principle of indeterminacy" into the universe. Other scientists, to be sure, make light of this idea. But a great many scientists are beginning to say that science is true for all scientific purposes, and yet that it does not go the whole way in explaining life. While scientific thought is thus inclining to be a bit dubious about its ancient pretensions to omniscience and infallibility, the time would seem to be ripe for insisting that uncaused action—that is, free will—is one of the facts of life with which science is called upon to deal. If science neglects this fact, it may go hard with science. But it will not alter the truth.

Assuredly it is true that we do act on our own motives, however we come by them. Assuredly we are unable to believe that our motives are wholly dictated to us. We cannot help feeling that, while many influences play on our minds, we need not yield to any one of them unless we choose to surrender, so that our motives are decided by our own independent judgment.

It is true that human behavior in the mass can be predicted statistically. That is, certain percentages of people will conduct themselves in certain ways which the statistician, on the basis of previous records, can map out in advance. But no one can forecast where any given individual will stand on this map. In the same way, the time of death can be statistically predicted in the mass. That is what makes life insurance a safe business. The law of averages does hold for human beings, as for things. Nevertheless, there is a greater margin of uncertainty in the case of human beings. For some of them cut up unexpected capers now and then, and eccentricities are contagious.

At any rate, no one can predict what any one individual will do at any given future time. Why not? Because the interplay of the determining factors is too intricate for us to follow. Because, further, it goes forward in the brain, which our eyes cannot penetrate. So say they who deny free will. Because, when a man makes up his mind, he actually does it on his own. He sits as judge upon all the influences submitted to him, and renders a verdict which he himself cannot foresee until all the data are in, and have been balanced. So say we who prefer facts, however inexplicable, to neat theories which leave out inconvenient facts.

3.

Of the fact that we are really free—that we don't have to, but we can if we will—we cannot entertain any effective doubt, try as we may. Of course this freedom is limited. Most of the factors in our experience were given us without our consent. We were born in this generation, in a definite place, of a sex we did not choose, and with relatives whom we did not choose either. We cannot change these circumstances. We cannot help living in our own bodies, whether we like them or not. We cannot adopt a new personality and environment, cutting off every connection with the old. Nor can we make anything out of nothing. But we can make something different out of what we have; and, even more important, out of what we are. Within those limits, but with a spacious region for free living, we are potentially creative, as the sons and daughters of God ought to be.

Moreover, we shall be making something different out of what we have and what we are, as long as we live, whether we want to or not, and whether or not we go about it deliberately. For there is no escape from the exercise of free will. If we give way before every wind that blows, instead of standing firm and resisting, it will be because we choose to be blown about—because that seems easier than to exert our energy. If we do all the things we ought not to do, and make a mess of life generally, we shall still be doing as we please, not merely obeying passions or impulses which are too strong for us. For, after all, it is we who have our passions, not they that have us.

What seems, and indeed is, the highest prerogative of

our nature is a gift loaded with dynamite. Dynamite can be terribly destructive. But the reason why it is produced commercially in large quantities is that it can also be indispensably useful at certain stages of construction. So we are brought back to our familiar contrast of the destructive and the constructive, the bad and the good. There would be no sense in appealing to anyone to be a builder rather than a wrecker, if it were not up to the individual to make what he chooses of his life, starting from where he is, but heading for what he wants. The ground of all morality is in the fact of freedom. The achievement of morality is in the right use of freedom—in using it to work with God upon His project of making the world a better place for men, inheritors and sharers of His nature, to live in.

VIII.

The Two Selves

I.

IF PERSONALITY really counts for as much as we have been assuming, then it would seem that self-forgetfulness, which is urged upon us as the key to character, must be a disastrous shifting of emphasis from where it properly belongs. Surely self-realization, rather, is what is called for. There is a cult of self-realization nowadays. And its devotees claim to be building on the solid foundation of human nature and its inborn rights. "Rights" means in this sense, of course, insistent demands, which continue as long as life itself. It would be hard for us to deny that claim, while still maintaining that personality is the most significant thing in the universe.

Self-realization is a dangerous aim, however, unless one understands it clearly. But for that matter so is self-forgetfulness. It would be in the last degree unfortunate, to say the least, to forget one's principles and ideals, which are assuredly part of the self. Indeed, under some circumstances, when people behave unworthily, we make self-forgetfulness a reproach. "You are forgetting yourself," we say. And no one takes it for a compliment.

I should go so far as to declare that the right kind of

self-realization and the right kind of self-forgetfulness are the two sides of one process. But then "self" must be a treacherous term. For it must indicate two opposites at the same time. We have always to be on our guard against such deceptive obscurities of speech. There is the lower self, and there is the higher self; or, if you please, the superficial self and the deeper self; or, as I should prefer to put it, the little self and the wider self. The little self has little interests, and is always exercised about the gratification of its own instant desires. The wider self takes in all other selves and their surroundings as belonging to its own domain, and is characteristically exercised about the larger good. One has to forget the little self in order to realize the wider self.

But naturally none of us is going to do that, unless in some demonstrable fashion it is actually to our own interest. God made us mindful of our own, and it is right that we should be so. It is only self-interest in the little sense that can properly be called selfishness. Self-interest in the wider sense is, as I hope to show, the motive power of generosity and great-heartedness.

After all, what is the little self but the body? And what is the body but another animal, along with dogs, apes, and tigers? It is more highly developed than they, of course. Its appetites are capable of greater refinement. Nevertheless, the body and its impulses are not human. For they are not personal. They drag a man down, if he overindulges them, to the lowest level of self-consciousness, where it almost disappears. And they do their utmost to overthrow self-determination.

We can devise more delicate forms of bodily gratification than can other animals. We can substitute conven-

tional outlets for our passionate selfishness, and control our more obvious and less attractive appetites in order to concentrate upon some kind of ambition—to be rich, to be powerful, to be famous, or to be envied. We can carry our capacity for thinking into the furthest niceties of calculation and shrewdness. But, even so, we are still acting as animals, not as persons, so long as our attention is centered directly or indirectly upon our bodies, including all phases of our being which, like our bodies, occupy an infinitesimal spot in space and a moving point in time. That kind of self-realization makes a man dry up or rot away. It is a kind of slow suicide.

I am not moralizing when I say so. The facts speak for themselves. They are striking and unavoidable. When people talk about self-realization, and then follow the dreary paths of libertinism as if that were the way to realize themselves, they are making a mistake which they could easily see; a mistake which they would have to regret, if they used their heads. Even on their own showing, they ought to use their heads. For their heads are part of their bodies, about which they are so eagerly concerned.

Of course we should guard against the inference that the body is somehow base, and its appetites in themselves evil. We should hold no such unwholesome notion as that. When Christians sound that morbid note, they are echoing not Jesus but Paul and the Neo-Platonists. The body and its impulses are a gift of God, for which we ought to be grateful. We have no appetites which do not lead to richer and larger life, when they are held to the channels of experience in which they were intended to move. But when the streams overflow their banks—when

indulgence at the expense of others' rights, or over-indulgence, takes the place of just and intelligent control and exercise—then the wider self is likely to be drowned. The body is a glorious servant, but a tragic master.

When we analyze the self, however, instead of jumping to conclusions, persuaded against our own more thorough judgment by clamorous urges from below, we see at once that we are not our bodies. I am the life and the mind of my body. But, though I live in every part of it, for the time being at least, my body is no more to me than a house to shelter me, and a tool to carry out my will. In my very self I am a flowing stream of consciousness, determining in some measure its own direction.

Where did the stream come from? What are its tributaries? How comes it to have a body to canalize its course? What and whence are the body's ingredients, so different from the self, yet essential to its functioning and expression here?

My body is an organism. It is my life which organizes the elements of which my body is composed. But these elements are drawn from the soil, through various means for their distribution, especially other organisms, plants and animals, upon which I feed. Without soil and air I could have no body. But soil and air have their life-sustaining properties from the whole system of inorganic nature—the stellar universe—by which they were developed, and in which they hold a definite place and perform certain essential functions.

I do not know where to draw the line between my body and the rest of the world. For from the rest of the world it came. Without the rest of the world as a setting and

source of supply, it could not exist. And to the rest of the world it must inevitably return, dissolving at length back into the separate elements which have been united in its composition. It is not going too far to say that in a valid sense the whole universe is my body, even though I can feel at first hand only a very small part of the universe. That part is a representative and member of the whole.

My life, which builds my body as an organism, did not originate with me. It came from my parents. And the life my parents handed on to me came to them in turn from their parents, and so on back through human and animal ancestry to some single cell with which the long descent or ascent began. Where the life of that cell came from, we cannot say. Perhaps from God directly; perhaps through some felicitous chemical combination. But I am dependent upon that vast family tree. It is probable that every animal and every man living today is a leaf on that same tree. Everything points to a common line for all the divergent species of mobile life, and all the individuals in which they come to concrete realization. I do not know where to draw the line between my life and that of other living beings on the earth. It looks as if I were brother or cousin of them all. That is a biological observation, you will note, not a sentiment inspired by religion.

Thus far we have been discussing merely the physical aspect of my being, but the really significant thing about me is my mind. There are a great many matters about which I have to make up my own mind. That inescapable obligation to exercise free will is what stands probably

closest to the very heart of myself. Yet how comes it that I have a mind to make up?

In origin, mind is as mysterious as life; that is, as far removed from any positive knowledge now in hand, and as baffling to our investigations. It is one thing to say that mind is a form of progressive adaptation to environment, for the sake of self-preservation and the good of the race. But it is quite another thing to try to explain how this peculiar adaptation came about, in the higher animals and man, with all its overtones and eventual relative independence, taking the place which might have been filled by a mere perfecting of mechanical instincts such as ants have.

But, leaving this mystery unsolved, it is not at all difficult to list most of the sources from which the ideas have come to my mind, with which my mind has to work when I make it up. I have laid all nature and all culture under contribution in order to get these ideas. If there were no physical world for my senses to perceive, or if I had no senses for perceiving it, I should have no capacity for ideas in the first place. For even abstract ideas arise out of concrete observations.

Doubtless I ought to levy in more considerable amounts upon culture in many of its aspects, by deliberate choice and pursuit of learning. But, even if I hated to study, and had habitually flunked classes in school, and had never opened a book since I slammed the school door behind me, I should still be debtor to all races, and to all stages of civilization, for the ideas they have given me. Greece and Rome and remoter antiquity, Europe and the antipodes, savagery, barbarism, the middle ages, and modern

precise and technical intelligence—all have contributed ideas, true or false, to the currents of opinion which run through our social environment and find expression in every casual conversation.

The study of words, their origins, and the way their meanings have been shaded and changed through long usage, is a most suggestive and illuminating revelation on this subject. Though I could speak no tongue but American English, and mostly slang at that, still I should hardly know where to draw the line between my own mind and the mind of all mankind. For upon that vast reservoir I have been drawing, with every thought I ever uttered or suppressed.

Thus my life and my mind have a far ancestry, innumerable relatives, and an outreach as wide as the world. But before many more years I shall die. Then what becomes of me, so far as the earth is concerned? I am all through, am I not? But I have children. Even if I had no children, still I have had ideas, original or borrowed, which I have passed on to a few people, at least, who might never have had them without me. I have done work, which has in turn been the basis of other work by other people.

Several series of thoughts and events have been set in motion which would never have been started if I had not lived. Their effects will diminish as time goes on. And no doubt I shall be entirely forgotten in a very little while. But their effects, though diminishing, will never quite cease. My name may perish; but my personality will go right on being a factor among men, as long as there are still any men left on earth to come under my

remote and unrecognized influence. Just as I belong to all the past and to all the present, I belong to all the future too.

Now this brings us to an interesting conclusion. We have already seen that, like God, each of us is invisible. It now follows that, like God, each of us is omnipresent. The difference is that we assume He constantly feels that He is everywhere, as we are always aware that every part of our bodies is as near us as any other; while our feeling is limited to our bodies, so that we are likely to forget, or never to discover, that the universe belongs to us as well as to Him. Probably it was some such chain of reasoning as this which once led Paul to cry out, in what would otherwise seem to be an extravagant exclamation, "All things are yours!"

2.

The universe is the wider self of each of us. Self-realization ought to mean discovery of this wider self, and action harmonious with all it implies. Certainly, then, we can never achieve self-realization unless, with regard to the little self, the body-centered greed, the animal we have under our orders, we practice self-forgetfulness.

"To practice self-forgetfulness" is an absurd phrase, however. So long as one is trying to forget, one has to remember to try, so one goes on remembering. Rather, what we mean is that as soon as we come to an understanding of how big our outreach is, and how much belongs to us, our interest in the broad and various realm beyond our bodies is kindled by this sense of inalienable possession, so that we can spare no more time or attention for petty

things, like making ourselves comfortable, or looking important, or acquiring legal title to more wealth than we can sensibly use. We simply cannot be bothered.

All life is interesting to us, because all things are ours. That will bear repeating. The secret of happy living is in taking an interest in things. When we try to lay our hands on happiness in any other form, we usually find that what we took for substance was nothing but shadow. Or else we find that we get less satisfaction out of having than we did out of seeking. But even when we are stumbling along a rocky road, and storms are raging overhead, we can rise above our weariness and our worry if we are amateurs of geology, observing and classifying the rocks, and of meteorology, eager to keep tab on the developing weather conditions. It is no problem to awaken interest along any line, if we feel that everything along that line is in the last analysis a part of us. For we are all interested in ourselves.

It is plain what the effect of such interest must be upon our work. We all have work to do. And it is work that counts. For God is a builder. Goodness is simply constructiveness. Unless we are working at something, we are good for nothing. Since the work and its results belong to us—that is, come within the world-wide scope of our true selves—and we are interested in it in consequence, we shall work with a will, and forget ourselves in our work. Then the work we do will be our monument. And that is self-realization.

And of course other people will interest us too. For they and we are kin, all of us latter-day leaves on the tree of life, all fashioned mentally, as to our initial ideas at least, by the same environment. And they are parts

of our world. There is not much use in trying to be kind to people because we ought to be. Our self-righteous intentions will stick out all over us like bristles, and drive them away. But if we are spontaneously interested in people through a sense of kinship we are apt to share their feelings in imagination, and the Golden Rule will then be plain common sense.

Moreover, we shall want to know people, and as many of them as we can, and of as many kinds as possible. For to do so will expand our consciousness of the life we share with them. But no one will tolerate our acquaintance unless we conduct ourselves with consideration. So, even if our sympathy lagged, we should have to be courteous and generous in order to conciliate other people's good-will, and get them to gratify our interest by opening up to us, instead of shutting themselves away in a protective shell of forbidding and impenetrable reserve.

Self-realization is the right way of living, judging of rightness by the satisfaction it yields, provided we think clearly enough about the self to know which self it is, the little or the wider, that needs to be realized. Self-realization by self-forgetfulness is the rule, on the same understanding. Self-realization through being interested, doing good work and doing it well, and being thoughtful and kind toward others—that is a fairly accurate description of what we mean by character.

And the realization of the wider self gives a rational and compelling ground in authentic self-interest, as contrasted with the spurious sort of self-interest which is selfishness, for the observance of Jesus' precepts of universal brotherhood and good-will. His teachings are not misty ideals out of the clouds, but practical suggestions

as to the only sane and rewarding way to live. To know ourselves to the full is to come out at the Christian ethic. That is what Paul found when he came to his discovery of the wider self, and exclaimed, "All things are yours." So he finished the exclamation by adding, "And ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

IX.

The Things We Live For

1.

PERSONALITY, by its very nature, is invisible. So are the things that persons live for. Indeed, the things persons live for are not things at all. They are values and ideals.

An ideal is an imaginative idea of a value. A value is that which will fulfil some desire. By an imaginative idea we do not mean an idea of something unreal. We mean an idea of anything which, whether it be real or unreal, is beyond our present reach. If I am hungry, and see a good meal on the table, that meal is not an ideal; it is a fact. If I am hungry, and think of a good meal waiting for me on the table at home, this meal is at that point an ideal to me, though to the cook it may be already a fact. When I get home I may find a good meal. Or it may be a poor meal. Or there may be no meal at all. But, whatever I find when I get there, a good meal is my ideal on the way home. I have an imaginative idea of certain food values which will fulfil my desire.

This illustration shows that an ideal need not be lofty to be genuine. Whatever we want beyond what we have

is for us an ideal. All human beings are idealists to this degree, that they never reach a point where they do not want something more. If they can't get the best, they will take what they can get. But it is the best, from their own respective viewpoints, that they aim at. When I am hungry, I may be induced to put up with a poor meal; but I want a good one. And I have my own notion of what makes a good meal.

When we decide in our own minds, first, what would be good for us, and is within reason; second, what would be better for us, if we could only get it; and third, what we can get along with, if nothing else can be obtained, we are rendering judgments of value. Value has two unique and interesting bearings.

First, mind is essential to an appreciation of value. The more competent the mind, the more definite the appreciation. It is only mind at the personal level which can enter into its full meaning. But beneath the personal level mind can sense value, though it cannot think about the fact that it does sense value. When we used to say "Oats ahead!" to old Dobbin, on the last lap of a long drive, Dobbin knew what oats were, and had sense enough to appreciate our suggestion. The pace of the buggy accelerated accordingly, in the direction of the barn. Dobbin was following an ideal. But if we said "Gas ahead!" to the Ford, it would not canter any more rapidly toward the next filling station. For there is no mind in tin.

Second, value judgments take us beyond the realm of quantity into that of quality. There are no absolute measurements of quality, so far as we can find out. It

is a matter of taste. And there is no use in disputing about tastes. They are relative to the temperament and education of the person to whom they belong. Only a change within himself can change a man's tastes, or standards of value. Quality cannot be handled or tasted. Things can be handled and tasted, so that we can discover whether we like them or not. But our likes and dislikes are not in the things themselves. They are in us, as we react to things.

Yet, intangible as they are, our likes and dislikes are what we live for. We may try to reduce life to purely material terms, and deny reality to everything except what can be measured or weighed. But, even when we do that, we are acting on a preference for what we call hard facts which is in our minds, and which no scale can gauge. So things which can be measured and weighed have actually only an instrumental function for us. They are tools. They are means to some personal end. We cannot help it—we have to live as seeing that which is invisible.

When values are under consideration, it is conventional to discuss the good, the beautiful, and the true. But that discussion is beside the point for our present investigation. Let us classify values, instead, under three other headings, of a more practical sort, and examine how they are related severally to the little self which it is well to forget, and to the wider self which we ought to have in mind when we talk about self-realization. The terms we shall use leave something to be desired, but roughly they will serve. These three kinds of values of which we are thinking are then the useful, the interesting, and the personally satisfying.

2.

Our earliest judgments of value usually consist in estimating things on the score of their usefulness. Now of course that is an elastic word. Any value of any kind could be regarded as useful for some purpose or other. But I mean usefulness in the restricted sense, of yielding tangible advantage. Whatever is good for me, to keep my body strong or make it well, to make me more comfortable, or to help me along toward achievement of my competitive ambitions, is useful.

Clearly values of this sort are of concern to the little self. What I win along these lines, others must lose. The things that make me comfortable, or give me a feeling of being important, will be for my own exclusive use. And, since there is a limit to the number of things in the world, someone else who might have had them must get along without them.

Even knowledge and skill, when they are acquired for selfish ends, lose the humane breadth of true learning by contamination with this taint. They will be acquired for use as knives, to cut other people loose from things they have which I want. In acquiring them, moreover, if I have to earn my own way through school, I shall doubtless be working for prizes or scholarships, which no one else can enjoy if I succeed in winning them.

It is true that, if I have skill and knowledge enough to produce wealth in some new form, I shall be rendering a service to mankind, instead of taking bread from the poor. It is also true that to consult the mutual advantage of producer and consumer is on the whole and in the long

run more profitable than to play a sharp game, so that sound business is useful all around. "Honesty is the best policy." Nevertheless, in so far as my motive is to look out for "number one"—to get what is useful for me—I shall be judging the values of the world by the standards of the little self. So I shall sail as close to the wind of the law and reputable business practice as I dare. On the other hand, as soon as my primary business motive becomes service to my patrons and production of new wealth as a blessing to mankind, and I begin sincerely to regard whatever profits accrue to me as merely incidental and scarcely worth troubling about, I shall have jumped up two classes, out of utilitarianism into the region of personally satisfying values.

Now no sensible man can have any quarrel with usefulness. If it were not for useful things, we should have no physical foundation for any higher standards. And a physical foundation is essential, as long as we go on living in this world. To take utility in our stride, on our way to something bigger, is one thing, however; and to live for mere utility—to assess the value of all things in terms of how we can get them away from others for ourselves, and of what we can do with them for our own betterment —is another. If anyone wants to live that way, it is a matter of taste. He is entitled to do as he pleases, provided he does not injure others. And he must injure them pretty flagrantly before we shall feel justified in interfering. Perhaps we have no right to criticize such a man, and certainly we ought not to blame him. He is not bad at heart. But he has made a serious mistake which has anti-social consequences.

Wherein his mistake lies we can show by asking him

a few simple questions. Does that kind of life really satisfy you? That is, does it give you inner contentment and dependable friends and a feeling of serenity, with time for reflection and humor and good solid enjoyment? Or, on the other hand, does what you get whet your appetite to feverish intensity for something more? Are you more and more inclined to be suspicious that the people in your circle are fair-weather friends, who like you for what you can give them, and would leave you in the lurch if the time came when they might be called upon to give to you instead? Are you always tense and hurried? If you have succeeded, are you satisfied?

To follow ideals based on private usefulness, and nothing more, is to land sooner or later in a dull and stony field. I prefer bright skies and green meadows.

3.

The way out of that dreariness lies, as we have already observed, in cultivating broad interests instead of narrow possessiveness. Values of interest often coincide with values of usefulness. A steel mill is a useful establishment. But it is also a paradise for a man who likes machinery, even if he owns no stock in the company. Indeed, the same man would probably take a less wholehearted interest in the mill in itself after buying stock. For the chances are that he would then begin to inquire into efficiency of production, elimination of waste, and by-products and their marketing, instead of continuing to enjoy these operations purely as a spectacle.

Interest and usefulness are often found in the same place; so often that all useful things are also interesting. But interest is also discoverable in many places where use-

fulness is largely or entirely absent. There is no usefulness in a mountain peak or a sunset. There is no financial profit to the visitor from the costliest paintings in a public gallery. No bookkeeper ever got a promotion just because he was in the habit of reading good books. Yet all sensible people go on taking an interest in books and scenery. The more alive we are the more interest we take. And no matter how much we get out of the scenery or pictures or books there is just as much left as there ever was in them. If we share our enthusiasms—and enthusiasm is something we can hardly keep to ourselves—there is actually more interest in them than ever before; that is, more people take an interest in them, still without diminishing or even tapping the capital.

Moreover, things we are interested in for their own sake are not things we want to forget. For they do not make us nervous; they rest us. They do not shut us away from people by making us suspicious; they bring us into closer and friendlier relations with people, by making us expansive. If we are interested in our business only because of what we can get out of it, when evening comes we are eager to pull the roll-top down, and lock the office door, and get as far away as possible. When we cannot forget business, we have a sleepless night. If we are interested in the same business, however, chiefly because it is an interesting business, we never want to get away, and we begrudge the sleeping hours. Some men get the name of being slaves to their desks, just because they get so much joy out of their mastery of an interesting job. Such men are not slaves at all, but masters.

A man needs, however, to have other interests beside his business. He will be a better business man for taking

a mental vacation for at least an hour or two every day, in excursions of thought along other paths. And there are numberless paths of observation and study which lead to a real thrill of the mind. It is not hard to get interested in anything. It is a matter of directed attention. And the values of interest, in this sense of a wide and far outreach of intelligent curiosity, have this further advantage over the values of usefulness, that no one can take them away from us. As long as our minds go on working, we shall be rich in memories, ideas, and picturesque associations, in proportion to the persistency of our bearing of inquiry and admiration toward this enormously varied and splendid world of things and men in which we live.

4.

Yet there is something cold and impersonal about the values of interest, even at their best. They do not stand by us through all our ups and downs. From life's heaviest cares they are often unable to distract us. They stimulate and reward our intelligence, but they do not strengthen or console our hearts. They are not personally satisfying. To be interested in as many things as possible is a half-way ideal, a great deal more serviceable to our own well-being than to get as many things for ourselves as we can, but not nearly as intimate as we need to carry us through life's darker hours.

When we make it our ideal to be interested in as many people as possible, we are getting nearer to what we want. Yet it is possible to be interested in people only as a scientist is interested in specimens. And people as specimens, to be mentally pulled to pieces and put together again, are

as cold to the touch as the specimens in a cabinet of minerals.

To be interested in people as people—that is, as persons, like ourselves yet strangely unlike, with the same rights but with different desires, with the same fundamental nature but with different individual traits and aptitudes—that is to come into a personal relation with persons. It is to be religious in our feeling for our fellowmen. It is to enter into such stimulating contacts with them as make us thoroughly alive, and bring us into ever clearer consciousness of our true and wider selves, akin to all that breathe, and sharing the universe with them, as the one body common to us all. These are the values which are personally satisfying.

Disappointment confronts us sometimes in personal relations. But that is usually when we have expected the wrong thing, or have expected the right thing in the wrong way. When we meet people, with our minds open to what they really are, and our hearts open to give and receive interest, respect, and affection on whatever terms may be feasible, then friendships are almost sure to follow and multiply. Personality grows, in order to meet their welcome demands. And life has found a haven of shelter and comfort.

We live for invisible aims. We are made that way; we cannot help it. The only invisible aims, or ideals, which yield personal satisfaction, are those which are directed to ends which are also invisible in themselves; that is, toward personal relations. Personal relations mean good relations, of course. Bad relations are impersonal on one side or both. To treat a man as if he were a thing

for our convenience is to affront his dignity as a person. To treat him as on a par with ourselves, even though his conduct may be offensive, is to realize an affinity with him which will eventually persuade him to reciprocate in kind.

Good relations, personally satisfying, can only be won by giving up the desires of the little self, and renouncing mere usefulness as a test of real value. A man cannot live for the world and for the Kingdom of Heaven, too. When Jesus contrasted the world and the Kingdom, as in the Sermon on the Mount, it is evident upon reflection that he cannot have been thinking of here and hereafter. If his words are to make sense, he must have been thinking, instead, of two regions of living, both of them available here and now, but neither to be enjoyed without sacrifice of the other. His classic exposition of true values and right ideals is in that Sermon (Matthew 5, 6, 7). The climax of the discourse is in the passage about treasures upon the earth, and treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-34). And the text of that passage is in the words, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon"—that is, personal gain. To serve God is obviously to live by a standard of values big enough for our wider selves. And he who lives by such a standard is laying up treasures in heaven.

Jesus did not invent this alternative. It lies in the nature of our life itself. We cannot live whole-heartedly for what will satisfy us, and at the same time for what will divide us from our fellows, as self-seeking inevitably does. For it is in unison with others, not division from them, that satisfaction is to be attained. The Christian makes his choice, in the light of these facts to which Jesus

has drawn his attention. He decides that the only gain he wants is good-will and kindness, so far as by his own kindness and good-will he can obtain them from other persons. And they can be had in no other way. He wants this gain so much that he will give up everything else, if necessary, in order to get it.

X.

The Problem of Evil

I.

THE standard of values and the program of living which Jesus expounded in the Sermon on the Mount are of such a sort that our reflective judgment tells us that they are sound and sensible, and ought to work. This confirmation by our own minds bears out Jesus' conviction that in the divine government of mankind there is nothing arbitrary, everything natural. Beyond question he did believe that nature is thus ordered by God Himself. The ideals which reason and conscience approve for us were in Jesus' understanding the principles upon which God had constructed the world.

In other words, they were final causes, to use an Aristotelian term. Aristotle classified causes under four headings: material, efficient, formal, and final. To illustrate, when a poet composes a sonnet, paper and pen are the material causes of the poem. The poet's brain and writing hand are the efficient causes. The sonnet arrangement—fourteen lines, in two stanzas, of eight and six lines respectively, with a definite scheme of rhymes—is the formal cause. The poet's purpose—the impression or truth which he sets out to convey—is the final cause. Jesus

regarded the ideal in general, as tentatively defined for us by sane aspiration, as the final cause of the world. He held that the ideal exists apart from the world, and before it, in the purpose of God.

And Jesus himself lived by the principles he taught; more perfectly, at least, than any other has ever done. Yet what happened? Instead of making friends, he made enemies. Instead of winning love, he incurred hatred. Instead of living a fuller life, he died on a cross.

To be sure, he did make a few friends, and kept them. Eleven of his twelve intimates, and his mother and two or three other women, did love him with rare devotion. And doubtless he lived more fully than most men do, so long as his life continued, because of their devotion. Further, it is easy to see that his downfall was due to a mere handful of hard-hearted men in high places. These men misled the rank and file of the people into a superstitious fear of Jesus, by the lies they told about him. If the masses had not been like sheep—if they had acted on their own impulses, instead of heeding their rulers—the principles by which Jesus lived would doubtless have had, on a much more extended scale, the effect which is normally to be expected from them.

Nevertheless the fact remains that, as we are accustomed to reckon such matters, Jesus failed, and hard-heartedness succeeded. Of course, Jesus' memory has been winning recruits for his cause ever since, on account of that character in him to which the cross bears final witness, confirming the whole tenor of his life. But not even that later fact can offset the stubborn ugliness of this earlier fact, that Jesus did fail in his own generation. If the ideals he illustrated are principles and final causes in

the mind of God, how could this happen? That query is a sterner introduction than any other to the problem of evil.

2.

Evil is a big word. It covers several different types of action and experience. So we must analyze this term.

First, then, evil includes such attitudes and actions as we find in the persecutors of Jesus. They knew that most of the things they said about him were not true. They were ever and again laying clever traps for him, to get an excuse for trumping up damaging charges against him with a color of plausibility. The fact that they had at last to convict and execute him on perjured testimony is a tribute to his astuteness. No man can be as good as a man ought to be if he is not quick-witted. These men were ruthless in their bitter opposition to Jesus. The reason for their ruthlessness was that, in one way and another, he was undermining their unscrupulous and profitable ascendency over the people.

They were deliberate in their wrong-doing. In that they were like many other men in every other time. Each of us, indeed, has in some direction and degree been like them, now and then. Deliberate wrong-doing is what we call moral evil, or sin.

Second, there are such attitudes and actions as the common people took up at the instigation of the ruling classes. They were manifestly sincere in shouting, "Crucify him!" For all they knew, he really was a criminal, or at the very least a dangerous heretic, perverting sacred truth. What they did was wrong, but there was nothing wrong with their motives. They were like us, when we do things

which result in mischief and shame, while meaning to do only what is right and fair. Evil of this sort is not sin, but mistake. Mistakes lead to trouble and cause suffering even more, probably, through ignorance or neglect of natural law, than through detrimental social conduct. Many diseases and deaths can be traced back to some failure to observe the rules of hygiene, for which no one can be blamed, because the rules simply were not known. So alongside of sin, as another department of evil, we have error, just as bad in its results, but innocent in intention.

Finally, a great deal of destruction and suffering is occasioned by natural catastrophes, over which men have no control at all. The toll of lightning, flood, tornado, tidal wave, and earthquake, in human life and wealth, is appallingly heavy. Whatever the ancients may have thought, there is no connection that we can bring ourselves to acknowledge between moral justice and these visitations. No doubt San Francisco is a wicked city—all cities have much wickedness in them. But why was San Francisco nearly wiped out by earthquake and fire in 1906, while Paris and New York were spared? So, along with sin and error, we have accident as a further department of evil.

And for evil in these three forms—sin, error, accident—we must find some way of accounting, if we are to achieve any sort of understanding of life, beyond mere skill in the technique of living as long and as comfortably as we can. This is the toughest challenge our minds will meet. The man who could thoroughly clear the matter up would be wiser than anyone I know. But perhaps we can find enough light on this problem to go on by. And that will have to do.

3.

First, however, before we plot out the curve of an opinion in which we shall feel entitled to repose some measure of confidence, it is desirable to note two radical solutions which have been proposed for this problem—the dilemma, God versus evil.

On the one hand, many have seized the second horn of the dilemma as more real than the first. Overwhelmingly impressed by the amount and poignancy of the evil in the world, they have boldly announced, "Since these things are so, there can be no God." There is no use in denying that it is a puzzle how God and evil can exist together in the same world. For God is by definition good, and responsible in the last analysis for all that is. But there is not much use in trying to put a puzzle together by leaving out some of the pieces. The pattern will not be complete if we do. We came to our conclusions about God on grounds with which evil had nothing to do, and which seemed inescapable. We knew all the time that evil was there, and would presently challenge our conclusions. Yet we had to go ahead, because all the evidence along these other lines pointed unmistakably one way. I see no reason now for going back on the conviction we have already reached. If we could get no farther, and had to stop and be contented with believing in two contradictory things, with adequate reasons for each, we should yet be something less than honest if we did not maintain both truths, with a rueful smile at our inability to reconcile them, though reconciled they must assuredly be in the unfathomable totality of truth, of which they both are parts.

We could repeat most of the argument of the last paragraph in reply to the alternative radical method of dealing with this puzzle. There are people who say, "Since God is, there cannot really be any evil. What we call evil must be mere illusion." Now if I had to choose between God and evil, I should unhesitatingly prefer to go on believing in God. So I sympathize with those who take this view.

But unfortunately the evidence for evil is quite as clear as the evidence for God, and vice versa. If by calling evil illusion one meant that wrong conditions are caused by wrong thinking and that the world as God sees it has not the faults our defective vision sees in it, so that the first thing we have to do in order to correct wrong conditions is to correct our own thinking and try to see the world as God sees it, we could admit that there is a good deal in that contention. Even if we could not go all the way, we could go a long way with people who hold that opinion.

Nevertheless, whatever their cause, wrong conditions are a part of human living. And for human living in all its parts God is responsible. Wrong thinking is just as much wrong as it is thinking. Illusion must have started somewhere. Someone must have started it. God must have started it, at least in the sense of making it possible, since God started everything. A wise man who professed this creed once said to me, "We don't know where illusion came from, but we do know how to get rid of it." That is practical enough, but it begs a question which reason cannot help putting.

So we still have to reckon with both horns of our dilemma, God and evil. We usually find that truth on any subject is not a middle road, an average between ex-

tremes of experience, but a paradox embracing them both. We cannot deny either God or evil, and continue to respect our own intelligence. So we must do what little we can to bring them both into the same picture.

4.

After all, it is not so very hard, if we remember hints which have been thrown out along the path we have already traveled. The heart of our argument for God was that personality in man implied a personal source in the nature of the universe. We saw that self-consciousness was the distinctive attribute of personality. And we saw that self-determination or free will was one of the constituent phases of self-consciousness. But how could there be any freedom of will, if only one choice were possible?

Only one choice open is no choice at all. A man would never appreciate good, better, and best, if he were not in a position to contrast them with bad, worse, and worst. And there would be no effective contrast, if the dark side of life were beyond his reach. Recalling that statistical prediction holds good of human action in the mass, we may say that, with two choices before him, the odds are that a man will choose wrongly something like half the time, unless and until he has been schooled to greater wisdom and self-control by the detrimental results of wrong choosing.

The facts are such that we have to admit that God purposed to create a world which should produce, not things only or mechanical dolls, but persons like Himself. There is no going behind that manifest decision of His. Since we have entire confidence in His wisdom and goodness

in every decision He makes, we get some idea of how incalculably valuable personality must be, if He thought it best to run the risk of moral evil in order to bring persons into being.

That we should often be involved calamitously in the consequences of others' wrong-doing is also a part of the price we must pay for enjoying this rich gift of personality. For an individual never grows into a true person in a social vacuum. It is only by being all tangled up with other people, and therefore subject in some measure to the results of their behavior, that a man can arrive at self-consciousness, and rise, through action and reaction with his fellows, to the higher levels of personal life, where principles govern conduct, in accord with a dependable standard of essential and lasting values.

So moral evil is not such a stumbling-block to our minds as we feared it might be. But how about error? It is as necessary to choose between true and false as between good and bad, if we are to be persons, and not mere intelligently adjusted machines. If we came into the world knowing everything, life would not be interesting, and we should not be able to grow. But growth is the most enjoyable of all the processes we know. Indeed, life itself is growth.

We grow in knowledge and wisdom in two ways: by trial and error—that is, by making mistakes and discovering that we have done so; and by the teaching which other people give us. In all vital matters, these two ways are at bottom one. For we never believe what others teach us, until we have tried it out for ourselves. That is why we say that experience is the best teacher. It is why nature makes boys and girls go through a period of doubt, skepticism, and imprudent self-assertiveness of opinion before

they reach mature convictions. No convictions can ever be mature until we have made them our own by testing them.

Individuals and the race as a whole have an enormous amount of learning to do, before workable certainties can be established throughout the wide realm of our varied interests and efforts. We could hardly help making mistakes. And we learn more from our mistakes than from anything else. So this second department of evil, dreadful as the misfortunes often are which occur in it, seems to be natural, inevitable, and on the whole justified by its results.

But there remains the dire chapter of accident. Here we may as well confess that we have no altogether clear answer. That need not worry us. For in attempting to solve these complicated problems we are like third-grade pupils, sitting aghast before problems in the higher mathematics. There is no reason to be discouraged. All we need is time. When we grow up, if we keep on studying, we shall deal as glibly in the most abstruse mathematical symbols as we do now in the table of twos. If we really believe in God, there is no harm in leaving to His understanding many things which we cannot possibly grasp as yet.

Nevertheless, there are two suggestions which may be offered as worth consideration.

First, there is usually a good deal of commotion, and some waste, in any building operation. God is still making the world. It is not yet finished. Perhaps earthquakes and the rest are just incidents in some larger business of His, some stage of His constructive activities beyond our limited comprehension. If the dire effects upon

human beings make this explanation seem cold-blooded, and unworthy of God's fatherly care, perhaps we ought to add that He probably has ways of making good this damage. His resources for men's welfare may not be exhausted when men are killed.

Second, we have contemplated the possibility that there may be other persons besides mankind, higher than man and lower than God, invisible to us. It might conceivably be that what we call natural accidents are instances of misconduct on the part of some one or more of these higher beings—God's foremen, so to speak, overseeing certain sections of His works. For, since they too (if they exist) are persons, they too must be free. And we may have to be involved in the consequences of their sins or mistakes, just as in the case of other beings, human like ourselves, with whom our lives are associated.

5.

Whatever you may think of these two suggestions concerning the evil that comes from accidents, we have gained something by discovering quite satisfactory reasons for human sin and error and their results. The rest we can surely leave with God. Three final remarks may make us more content to do so.

First, since this is God's world and God is good, we need not believe that any evil entails final loss. I take God to be too careful and competent a world-builder for that. I do not think that He would have made a world at all, no matter how valuable its incidental products might have been, if to do so involved anything so awful as the permanency of evil. And I should suppose that He must have been able to foresee the outcome in all its details, or

He would never have embarked upon so hazardous an undertaking. Evil as an instrument comes near to being understandable, like a surgeon's knife. Evil as a goal in God's world is unthinkable.

Further, no one has ever yet succeeded in measuring to the general satisfaction the proportion between good and evil in human experience. Some look habitually on the dark side. A few pretend to see only the bright side. Both sides are there. In God's world it seems reasonable to venture the guess that good does actually preponderate all the way through, as well as at the end. In either event, however, at the moment, there is always a bright side. We can look on that side if we will. And when we do—when we count our blessings as well as our curses, and then forget the curses at least long enough to go back and count our blessings over again—we are pretty sure to conclude that life is good.

Finally, and without any cheap and easy optimism, I want to add that every misfortune I have ever had or seen has been susceptible of treatment as an opportunity. Whatever we have, we can make something different of it, if we will; something better, if we try. Sometimes the most heart-filling joys are organically connected with deep sorrows which preceded them. But that is not likely merely to happen. We have to help bring it to pass.

XI.

The Laws of God and Man

I.

TWO main ideas as to the bearing of God toward men have prevailed among religious people in the Hebrew-Christian tradition. He has been regarded as King, and as Father. Among both Jews and Christians, both ideas have had their place. Before Jesus, however, the King-idea was given the greater prominence. Since his time the Father-idea has come to the fore. The difference between the two views is chiefly one of emphasis. But a shift of emphasis can bring a striking change of focus.

When we think of God as King, it follows that we shall think of His government of the world mainly in terms of law. For law is the form in which a king's will is usually expressed. When we think of Him as Father, on the other hand, our understanding of His administration will be translated into terms of love or good-will. For mutual good-will is the normal basis of satisfactory conditions in a household.

Yet the one concept in some measure implies the other. For without the good-will of his subjects no king can

enforce the laws he makes. And without some definite standard of domestic authority and procedure, accepted by all its members, no household can be conducted with effective good-will.

The relation between law and good-will was thoroughly thought through by Paul. He is one of the most interesting thinkers in Christian history, as well as the earliest of the systematic theologians of Christianity. As a theologian his achievements are colored by the fact that his thought-forms, unlike those of Jesus, were conspicuously limited to the types familiar among pious and learned Jews of the first century.

Often he contradicts the views in which he was brought up, being forced to depart from them because the message of Jesus was too big for them to contain. But even when he does so it is with the same presuppositions as his opponents had. In this he is like a modern fundamentalist suddenly reconstructed into a liberal, and proceeding to disprove fundamentalism by the proof-text method which fundamentalists themselves employ, and liberals look upon with disfavor.

This limitation upon Paul's outlook ought always to be borne in mind when we read his works. Though his conclusions are usually sound and often novel, his manner of approach to theological questions is such as to make the resultant system radically inadequate for most minds of the modern type.

The very fact, however, that Paul seldom went beyond the bounds to be expected in a converted first-century rabbi, and had nothing like the daring independence and breadth of Jesus as a thinker, often makes his comments

on the relations of Hebrew to Christian belief and practice especially valuable. So it is in this matter of law, and of the good-will which springs from faith—that is, from confidence in God as our Father and Friend.

Paul was too loyal to Judaism to make light of the Law of Moses. But he was too loyal to Christ to acknowledge the final supremacy of the law. And he saw that the two dispensations were organically connected in such a way that the New could never have been established except on the foundation of the Old. When he set himself to bring this connection into a clear light he stated his conclusion in a phrase which is susceptible of application to all law, as well as to the Law of Moses: "The law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ." The name of Christ stands here, of course, for all that the teaching of Jesus involves, especially the shift of accent from servile obedience to free comradeship as God's requirement of men.

Paul based his conclusion on the way in which well-ordered families are conducted. Rules do come first in family life. But they are for the purpose of training children in decent and cooperative living, until they are able to think and act for themselves; until they reach the point where parents need no longer pose as masters, because they have been promoted by their children, so to speak, to the rank of friends, whose counsel it has become second nature to consult. Law is a schoolmaster. Children need schoolmasters. Adults can and will stand alone. If they have been well schooled, they will do through good-will the sort of thing which laws are enacted to insure among the immature and irresponsible.

2.

With this view of the educational function of law as our starting point, let us see what kinds of law there are, and how they fit into the scheme of living for religious people. Three kinds of law have been generally acknowledged: natural law, divine law, human law.

Natural laws are the principles which govern the succession and interrelations of the phenomena with which science deals.

Divine laws are regulations imposed upon human conduct in God's name. Among Jews and Christians they have been variously held to include either the whole of the Mosaic legislation; or the moral elements in that general body of enactments, as summarized in the Ten Commandments; or the Ten Commandments, taken together with the two which Jesus added, love for God and for our neighbors.

Human laws are the statutes adopted from time to time by societies, either at their own will or at the behest of those in control, to specify the kind of behavior expected of their members and to establish forms of government for enforcing these requirements.

But when we begin to talk about natural laws our scientific friends enter an instant protest. Natural laws, they say, are not laws at all. They are simply descriptions of the ways in which things occur in nature. The laws were not made first, and things then obliged to conform to them; these principles are inherent in the things themselves, and constitute an essential part of our definition of them. Still we believe that God made nature; and that, consequently, when we describe nature accurately,

we are describing His will. And law is the accepted name for a sovereign's declared will. So it would seem that natural laws are at least as incontestably divine as any code for human conduct given through any prophet of God. And a study of natural law will afford us analogies for judging all others laws as well.

First, we may note that, though things may never disobey natural laws, persons certainly do. And when one of us disobeys a natural law the punishment always fits the crime. It is a matter of cause and effect, not of vengeance to which vent is given in capricious ways. If we disobey often enough, the consequences we suffer will sooner or later advise us or our fellows that we have made a mistake. An attempt will then follow to locate the mistake. Thus the law will be discovered and obeyed. That is the way in which natural laws were first identified, before there were scientists to search for them by premeditated and controlled experiment.

If natural laws are laws of God, then we may not unreasonably conclude that the way in which natural laws work is also the way in which divine justice is always administered—the punishment fitting the crime and the consequences tending to correction. Our bungling and haphazard man-made justice often invents fantastic and disproportionate penalties, which either destroy the offender or make him angry and more rebellious. But God's purpose is to restore the disobedient to right living. And He goes about it with a sternness which in the end turns out to be merciful. That sets a goal for human law-enforcement which would vastly change our penal methods if we sought it consistently.

Second, we observe that natural law is descriptive rather than prescriptive. When we state such a law, we are describing the right way of living, as touching the matter which it covers. In other words, natural law is reasonable. It is grounded in the nature of things. It never demands of anyone what it would not actually be better for him that he should do. It is a principle which all who understand it will approve, not a whim of prince or electorate to which reasonable men with good intentions can conceivably take exception.

It is a principle which becomes second nature when we have learned it, so that we no longer have to think about it. A child may have to touch hot iron in order to learn that fire burns. But an adult avoids hot iron spontaneously. The law, which he discovered by breaking it, has been a schoolmaster, bringing him to a good-will on the subject. He would judge himself insane if he departed from that good-will and intentionally touched hot iron.

It is worth considering whether every real law is not descriptive in much the same sense, as setting forth what every sensible and well-meaning man will recognize as precisely what he knows he ought to do anyway, for his own good not less than for the public good. Good citizens need no laws. Bad citizens need laws to curb folly and bring them to their senses. A law which prescribes a course of action against which honorable men conscientiously revolt, either because it is wicked or because it is foolish, is not a law at all but a mere statute. Its presence on the statute books tends not to bring men to a good-will but to drive them away from right living by decreasing their respect for other laws, too.

3.

Having identified natural law with the law of God, we pass to the further consideration of divine law, so-called, and of human law. I think we have to come to a drastic change in these classifications. For there is nothing to show that the Law of Moses (from which Jesus quoted both of the two commandments which he added to the ten) is in any unique sense divine; while any law which is manifestly descriptive of the requirements of the general reason and conscience, in the period for which it was enacted, deserves to be called a law of God.

We have an old story in Exodus, to be sure, of the tables of stone, written upon by the finger of Jahve, which were given to Moses in the mountain. And the Jews have always ascribed special sanctity to the Mosaic legislation, as embodying the revealed will of God for them as a people. But what were originally the Ten Commandments? They are given in three different forms in the Old Testament. All three cannot have been written by Jahve's finger. And in the Mosaic code as a whole we find not only moral principles, but also specific enactments on such subjects as hygiene, warfare, tribal government, church administration, and religious ceremonial, bearing all the evidences of having grown up through many generations of national life and experience. No one man laid down these laws. Nor, if we are to believe the inescapable indications of the texts themselves, did God dictate them all.

What we have in the so-called Books of Moses is the record of a slow accumulation of human laws enacted by a nation, in several different ways, under a profound con-

viction that in these laws the way of living was set forth which would be pleasing to Heaven. The point of view of the lawmakers was God-centered. But the laws themselves have no more claim to special reverence than any other statutes representing the best achievements of serious and fair-minded legislators. Nor would anyone think of adopting this code, whether he believed it came from God or man, for observance today. Intelligent as most of its sanitary provisions are, for instance, the modern science of hygiene has left them far behind.

In the business of making laws for the control of human conduct, whether in Moses' day or in ours, we infer from the analogy of natural law that the important thing is to describe what is, on the whole and at the time, the sane way of living, beneficial to the individual in so far as his interests do not conflict with the welfare of the community, and beneficial to the community without depriving the individual of proper opportunities for personal initiative and growth.

There is doubtless a natural law for human life as for inanimate beings. And natural law is of all laws the most manifestly divine. The principles of that law we have discovered in our study of the little versus the wider self. And we have found them formulated in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The justification of that revolutionary pronouncement, turning upside down the usual standard of values accepted among men, lies precisely in the fact that in their judgments of value most men are obviously misled as to their own nature and needs, by thinking in terms of the little self rather than of the wider self.

In other words, the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are not prescriptive of an unreasonable way of liv-

ing. Instead, they are descriptive of the only way of living which, upon careful analysis of the self, appears to be reasonable and right. In making definite rules on specific subjects the Christian as lawmaker will be trying to incorporate those descriptive principles in forms appropriate to the special circumstances.

Two points need to be mentioned in this connection. First, principles abide but rules come and go. The same principle will have to be expressed in different forms from time to time, as conditions change. Lawmaking often lags behind life. We have always on our books a good many statutes which have long since served their turn and are no longer useful or fitting. In such cases justice requires that they be revised.

Second, a law that goes farther than the general reason and conscience of the population for which it is intended, even in the right direction, is a dangerous law. If it goes only a little too far, it will merely be disregarded. But a rule disregarded is better abolished. If it goes a good deal too far, it may cause so much irritation that a crime wave, displaying contempt for law in general, will result. Christian citizens proposing or passing upon laws, however ideal the laws may be in themselves, ought always to remember this psychological aspect of law-making. The law is designed to be a schoolmaster, bringing us to such a good-will that clean and generous conduct will become second nature.

A great deal of education is required before any considerable advance can be made toward reform through law. Indeed, the reform had better come first, and the law be written to describe it after it has come into such general effect that exceptions are really exceptional.

When a law is a long way in advance of the conscience and reason of the citizenry, even though it be moving up the road toward the Kingdom of God, law-enforcement will have to lash the people to make them catch up with the procession. The law thus becomes a slave-driver instead of a schoolmaster. And slavery is a bad school of citizenship.

4.

Now let us turn from the Christian as lawmaker to the Christian as lawbreaker. When, if ever, is a conscientious Christian entitled before God to break a human law?

The question may seem startling. Yet most great Christians, beginning with Jesus, have been lawbreakers. Jesus set aside the Law of Moses at will, when it interfered with his duty. He acknowledged no human authority to be in the right, if it were in conflict with the right as God gave him to see it. If it be true that lawmaking usually lags behind life, there may be many statutes to which it would be stupid or even wrong for us to pay any attention. If the Christian has graduated out of mere obedience to codes into the freedom of creative good-will, finding in his own enlightened conscience the only authority he dares heed, then obviously in order to maintain his integrity he must sit in judgment upon ready-made laws which may not fit the situation he confronts. And he will probably have to act sometimes in flat contravention of such laws.

It is easy to say when a Christian is not entitled to break a human law. He surely ought not to do so when the trouble with the law is that it is too good for most people —as prohibition was, for instance. For the nearer a law comes to the ideal, the better it is for a Christian, even

though on psychological grounds it be ill-advised for the general public.

Nor ought a Christian to disobey because it is to his own advantage to do so. A Christian ought to have more sense than to be seeking the advantage of the little self. To be sure, some laws have to be set at naught because the essential freedom of the individual is thwarted by their observance. But in that case the rights of the larger self are being infringed. And that is a different matter.

Nor ought a Christian to break a law when his conscience is merely neutral, and would let him perform a prohibited action without compunction if the law did not stand in the way. For the Christian should make it a matter of conscience, as a brother to all men, to consult the general convenience, and never to offend the sensibilities of his neighbors simply because they seem unreasonable from his own point of view.

Finally, a Christian ought not to infringe any rule of society unless he is willing to endure the consequences of his illegal action, provided he is taken in the toils of human justice. A man heroic enough to break a law must not be a coward when it comes to taking his punishment.

By a process of elimination we now have only one possible justification left. A Christian is justified in breaking a law when his conscience positively forbids him to do as it commands, or positively bids him to do the opposite. Many Christians in the Northern States before the Civil War felt that way about the Fugitive Slave Laws. When they refused to give up fugitive slaves, and operated stations of the Underground Railway instead, they were better men, and even better citizens, for doing as they did, than if they had obeyed the law. Christians in the Roman

Empire felt scruples about obeying the law that they offer divine homage to the effigy of the Emperor. Many of them died rather than comply with that demand of the state. And we call them, not criminals, but saints and martyrs.

Obedience is a virtue. But free good-will is a higher virtue, for which the habitual practice of obedience to law prepares the way. Not mere obedience, but intelligent and cooperative good-will, is what God expects of those who accept their status as His children by confessing Him as their Father.

Another word for this attitude is loyalty. Not loyalty to institutions as such, whether flag or country or Church, but loyalty to persons, whom institutions exist to serve. Not loyalty to an abstract ideal, but loyalty to Jesus, in whom the ideal is made concrete and personal; and loyalty to all other persons, seen in the light of Jesus' teaching as our brothers; and loyalty to our own wider selves, which are one with them. He in whom such loyalty has become second nature, through his schooling in obedience to rational law, is no longer a slave or a child. He is a grown son, free, loving, and beloved, in our Father's house.

XII.

The Anatomy of Sin

I.

A VIOLATION of law is a crime. A violation of one of the principles which underlie just laws is a sin. Not all crimes are sinful; for not all laws are just. Not all sins are criminal; for many sins are too subtle to be covered by any code. Crime is a matter of outward conduct; sin is a matter of inward motive.

Sin is the darkest fact on the shady side of life. But calling it bad names will not help us understand it. And understand it we must, if we are going to understand life. For it is on the sin-side that life's hardest conundrums meet us.

There are two kinds of sin, impulsive and deliberate. Another way of putting it is to speak of sins of appetite and sins of policy. Our inclination is to attach much more shame to sins of appetite than to sins of policy. This is probably in part because they are usually much more conspicuous. It is hard to hide them; and, when they are found out, it is easy to trace them to their base source. And certainly sins of appetite ought not to be condoned. For their province is clearly the little self, of which we ought to be ashamed. They usually indicate that he who

commits them is living like an animal instead of like a person.

This is not always the case, however. For there is no sin in appetite itself or even in the bare fact of indulging it. Our physical desires and their gratification play a necessary part in living. Rather, sin is in excess, or in indulgence under circumstances which law or convention does not sanction. Excess is always wrong. But law and convention are not always right. It is conceivable that a man or woman might in some situations be morally guiltless, in behavior which was technically criminal.

Probably, however, the reason why respectable people, as we call them, show greater horror of sins of appetite than of sins of policy is that they themselves have their appetites pretty well under control, while they are the very people most apt to commit sins of policy. Sometimes they keep themselves from bodily sin because their appetites are not strong. Sometimes they have been fortunately placed for lawful indulgence. Occasionally they are really strong on that side of their nature, and enforce stern self-discipline. Of course, then, they will condemn the sins they shun more vigorously than the sins they practice. For few of us remain objects of horror to ourselves for any length of time.

Most respectable people hold aloof from sins of appetite, while inclining to sins of policy, because they are long-headed. If they were not, indeed, they would not be respectable. The control of appetite means preference of some greater good farther away to an immediate pleasure which would interfere with getting the greater good. That is a long-headed view. When these long-headed people are selfish—that is, when the greater good they seek is

fundamentally just as much a matter of their own exclusive advantage as the pleasure they pass up—then they will make far-sighted schemes to get what they want. And they will follow out those schemes, unrelentingly, at the expense, if need be, of everybody else who also wants what they are after, or who would obstruct their plans in any way.

Such schemes are what I have called sins of policy. They are also called by much more complimentary names, for they often lead to what is carelessly labeled success in life.

It is instructive to observe Jesus in contact with these two kinds of sinners. In reading the records of his life we cannot but be struck by his habitual disregard of selfish aims. He brought to his judgment of men and women a mind unprejudiced by secret sympathy with any form of wrong-doing. And his attitude was the direct opposite of ours.

We are afraid of being contaminated by a drunkard or a wanton. But we rather admire a shrewd man who makes his way to the top, even if he has no scruples at all about how he gets there. Jesus, on the contrary, seems never to have shown any aversion from people whose sins were of the body. He met them as their friend. With compassionate delicacy he overlooked their frailties. He lifted them up to the level of their better selves, for the time being at least, by courteously assuming that they and he were of like mind. One of the charges brought against him by those who compassed his downfall was that he consorted with publicans—Rome's tax-gatherers, who were pariahs among the Jews, and generally a loose-living lot —and even with harlots. One can imagine respectable

mothers warning their sons against this dangerous radical, and enforcing their point by exclaiming, "You know, he goes with the most dreadful people!" On the other hand, Jesus used words as sharp and menacing as lightning against respectable people who lived for themselves and had no regard for their neighbors except to take advantage of them, to find fault with them, and to spread gossip about them; against people like the highly respectable gentlemen, pillars of the Church and of the best society, who brought about his death.

To be sure, Jesus' manner may not have been a complete index to his real thought. He may have used gentleness in the one direction and severity in the other, simply because he was a good psychologist, and realized that these were the respective ways of successfully engaging the attention and awakening the conscience of two widely sundered human types—men who sinned because they thought too ill of themselves, and men who sinned because they thought too well of themselves. But I cannot help thinking that in this matter his manner did reveal his own deep feeling. For sins of policy are apt to be more deadly than sins of appetite. If Jesus were indeed such a one as we have judged him, to kill him was surely the foulest sin this world has ever witnessed. Yet he was killed by respectable people, as an item in their selfish policy.

2.

So much for the kinds of sin, and their relative gravity. Next we have to consider the consequences of sin. It is the consequences in this world that we now have in mind. For we have not yet gone into the question of another life after we leave here. And, when we do take up that ques-

tion, we shall see that no other life would mean anything to us unless it was continuous with life on earth, so that we could foreshadow its conditions, in principle though not in detail, by what we are now experiencing.

When a man commits a crime, and is caught and convicted, the state punishes him. Whatever it be that he has done, he will be sent to prison, if he is not executed. Criminals all go to prison alike, though for offenses of every description. The penalty does not correspond to the nature of the offense, though its duration may be roughly proportioned to the degree of the offense. It is on this analogy of human law that many have thought of God's reaction to sin. The sinner is a criminal in God's sight; so God will make him suffer, in any way the Judge may find convenient, whether there be any relation between the sin committed and the penalty exacted or not. And rewards will be distributed to the righteous on the same basis. Thus, if a man does good along one line, he may expect recompense along some other line. If he is generous to the poor, his sons will perhaps be bright in school. Or if he does wrong, some penalty equally unrelated is likely to follow. If he cheats his partner in business, perhaps he will be hurt in an auto accident, or his wife will die.

That seems reasonable enough. The trouble is that it doesn't work that way. Bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. If we try to assess our neighbors' characters by their health or prosperity, we get into a hopeless muddle. If it doesn't work that way in this life, there is no reason to suppose that it will in any other life, either. Apparently, then, God must have some other plan for enforcing His laws.

And He ought to have. For what could be more absurd than to distribute rewards and punishments which are in no way related to what went before? That may be the best we men can do in administering justice. But it is not really fair or sensible.

We have already noted the method which God employs for securing obedience to His will in one important department of His administration, the field of natural law. There the punishment always fits the crime. For they are related as cause and effect. We can discover a law we have unconsciously broken, by reflecting on whatever action of ours preceded our misfortune. It is to be supposed, then, that so equable and beneficent a method will be followed throughout God's government. And we have to look for consequences of sin which are inherent as germs, so to speak, in the sin itself.

We have not far to look. The principle will have an almost limitless variety of applications, corresponding to the varieties of sin which men commit. But all sin is a deflection of life's desires and energies from the wider to the little self—from the interests of human personality to the interests of the animal body. Personality is our bond with God. The body is our bond with the beasts. The more we sin, the less we shall have in common with God, the nearer to the beasts we shall come. That is the principle. Whether the process will ever be carried to its logical conclusion, in the complete extinction of personality, is beside the point at present. It goes forward far enough, at least, so that our interests become circumscribed. Our sympathies get narrower and narrower. Our appreciation of the finer things of life grows dull, almost to the vanishing point. We are shut in upon our petty physical

desires, which are never satisfied. They make us greedy, coarse, querulous, mean, underhanded. We lose touch with all really living and vivid personalities, because such persons talk a language we no longer understand.

Perhaps that will not seem at first a very heavy price to pay for the pleasures of selfishness. Probably it cannot be represented in concrete enough terms to frighten people away from sin. But it has the advantage of being reasonable, and the further advantage of being observably true.

Often, indeed, sin involves some breach of natural law. Then the natural consequences follow. But they would follow equally upon a breach of law with no ignoble motives. And it is possible to sin so cautiously that no unpleasant material consequences follow. That is why sinners so often seem to escape punishment. The penalty of moral evil is moral, not physical.

That penalty is inescapable. And it is terrible, when one takes the full measure of such a catastrophe. It means that an individual who might be getting the best which life has to give misses it all.

Doubtless only the reflective will grasp all that is involved. And we should like to rescue from sin all who are its prey, reflective or otherwise. So we may wish that we could describe this fate in more obviously frightful terms. But frightening people away from evil is not as effective, or as good for them, as attracting them to goodness. Men whose righteousness consists in shunning wrong because they are afraid have only a shadow of righteousness. For to be good means to do the right, not simply to abstain from the wrong.

Tourists do not get much out of mountain scenery if they go to the mountains just because they are tired of

the prairies. The mountains themselves, with their snowy peaks and crystal azure air, deserve to be loved for their own sake. He who has once seen them will never again be content to live where they cannot be seen. Likewise he who glimpses the high and splendid ranges of life more abundant, the sphere of the wider self, will never again be content to dwell in the swamps of the body. The business of religion is to declare the glory of God. The squalor of sensuality, gross or refined, will not need to be pointed out, to any who have caught that vision.

So sins bring their own proportionate penalties. And the common nature of all these penalties is that they consist in some sort of deprivation, rather than in any revengeful infliction. When a man comes to his senses, and finds out how much he is missing, he can be trusted to turn about, and seek those things that are above. God's justice is not retributive in purpose, but corrective or remedial.

3.

And what of the causes of sin? Underlying and overtopping all others, of course, is the free choice of the wrong, by a self-determining person. Nothing can discharge anyone from that initial responsibility for his own actions.

Choices, however, while freely made, are also made upon the suggestion of sundry influences from within and without. An influence is never strictly a cause of sin. But, in a larger sense, it deserves to be so classified, because it may be the cause of a disposition toward sin. No influence from without can gain admission, unless there be a traitor within the gates of the citadel of self. So our

concern is with the influences from within, which predispose a man to wrong and disastrous choices.

First, then, we must note that a man is turned toward evil by mistaking its nature. No one confronted with a manifest alternative, the bad on one side and the good on the other, would ever choose the bad. But what is the good, in this sense? The satisfying, to be sure. The choice, as it actually confronts our minds, is always between the lesser good and the greater good. The lesser good is usually near at hand, and easy to get. The greater good is farther away or higher up, and requires patience, persistence, and the control of passions clamorous for instant gratification, if we are to reach it. If we do not take the whole situation into account, it is easy to act in haste, and rush to embrace the attractive thing within reach. That immediate appeal of the lesser good, betraying incautious minds into moral error, is the strongest of the influences which prompt men to sin.

Second, after a man has once made a wrong choice, habit comes in, as a further and growing influence to keep him at it. Any action we take digs a channel for itself in our bodies and minds. Any later action in the same field of interest will find it easier to flow down that channel than to dig a fresh one for itself. The more actions flow down the channel, the deeper it gets, so that the natural drainage of that field of interest will be through its course, and it would require a feat of moral engineering to dig a new channel in another direction and draw off this drainage from the first channel. That is how habit works. We do a thing first because we want to. Then we do it again because it is easy. Then we keep on doing it, even after

we have come to hate it, because we imagine that we cannot help ourselves—we have to.

It is this very surrender of our freedom to habit which constitutes the third of the major internal influences causing a disposition toward sinful choice. We say that we do a thing against our will. But that is impossible. We may suffer things against our will—things someone else does. But the only way we can do anything is with our will, not against it. What we mean is that we do it against our desires. We give up our desire at the summons of some habit which we suppose has captured our will. As long as we entertain that notion, we are helpless. But we are rendered helpless simply by our wrong thinking. There is nothing anywhere that really can capture our will. It belongs to us. We cannot get rid of it even if we try. And it enables us at any time to do anything we please, within the limits of the physically possible, all the bad habits in the world notwithstanding.

It seems worth while to pause here long enough to suggest that not all of the habits which we have been taught to regard as bad are necessarily such as they appear. They may arise, for instance, from actual physical necessity, so that they are something done to us rather than something we do. Suppose a woodland priest were dedicated to the service of a forest altar, which imposed the liturgical commandment that he should fast daily from midnight until noon, without even taking a drink of water. And suppose that, after resisting thirst manfully for many agonizing months, one morning at nine he feels himself overpowered, and downs a deep draft from a cool bubbling spring near the altar. Straightway he feels like a new

man. He goes about his duties of the day buoyantly. The next day he does the same thing again, and has the same delightful reaction. This goes on indefinitely. He is a more effective priest, in every way but one. But he is regularly breaking his vow. He will conceal the fact, and feel a deep sense of sin, and perhaps be moved to lacerating remorse. Yet in a sensible view his action would seem to be not wrong but right. His body actually needs the water. The liturgical commandment is against nature, and without justification. He is not offending any real god, but simply obeying a law of hygiene, which the only real God imposes.

This instance of manifest mistake of conscience will serve to introduce us to a fourth internal cause of disposition toward sin. For, even in the absence of any such legitimate excuse, we have an amazing knack of inventing excuses plausible to ourselves. We make up reasons in extenuation of our faults which have no correspondence with truth. We paint a bright-colored picture in our fancies, of situations in which anyone else, who knew the facts, would see only sinister shadows. Instead of calling a spade a spade, as a candid person would do, or a dirty shovel, as a remorseful person would do, we call it an attractive and interesting agricultural implement.

In other words, we delude ourselves. We refuse to see ourselves as others see us. If we did, we should not approve of ourselves. But we have to approve of ourselves, if we are to go on living—and sinning. Reform or suicide would follow if we were honest with ourselves. There is seldom much danger of suicide. But there are times when we are desperately afraid of reform.

4.

These, then, are the causes of sin. On the one hand, free will exercised in a wrong choice. On the other, the influences which predispose us to choose wrongly: mistaking an evil for something good, that is, genuinely satisfying; following an habitual course, rather than exert our energies to correct it; surrendering, when there is still plenty of fight left in us to win a victory, if only we knew it; and fooling ourselves with false excuses. What attitude shall we take, in consideration of these facts, toward moral delinquents?

If we lay our stress on the free will side, we shall deal with their case along legal lines, in terms of crime and punishment. The systematic and arbitrary punishment of the guilty is doubtless necessary in society, as a matter of practical politics. The fear it engenders in other potential offenders probably does serve to some extent as a deterrent. And occasionally the shame and pain involved may make the sinner a better man. But most people are hardened, not softened, by scolding and beating. Resentment seldom inspires an honest effort to be good. There is not much hope of bringing people back to their better selves by force.

The alternative to force is persuasion. The alternative to the legal view of sin is the medical or psychiatric view. The stress now falls on the state of mind of the sinner, rather than on what he has done and the devising of a penalty to pay him back. The psychiatrist analyzes his patient's errors, and exposes them to the patient himself by an educational method, leading the patient to see where he has made his mistakes instead of trying to drive him.

Psychiatry numbers its successes by the hundreds, for every one achieved in the moral realm by punitive devices. It is of course practiced by many more amateurs than professionals, including parents, teachers, and ministers.

If we take this attitude toward the sinner, we may, in some sorts of illicit behavior, have to begin by scolding or denouncing him, to win his attention. Our scorn will then act on the sinner as an alarm-clock acts on a sleepy child. But we shall speedily pass to other ways of dealing with him, after he has awakened. Our task is to show him that his present state is not one of happiness, but of misery; when he has begun to feel that, to show him that there is something better to be had than the questionable good he has heretofore chosen; next, to show him that he can still get that greater good, if he wants it enough to exert himself; and finally, to lead him in a good-humored way to recognize the frivolity of his excuses, and to see himself at last as others see him, so that he will want to correct the embarrassing impression which he has been producing. Along these lines, in the hands of a wise and sympathetic practitioner of moral healing, there is almost no limit to the favorable results which can be obtained.

Did Jesus take the legal view of sin, or the medical? To put the question is to answer it. He was a physician of minds even more than of bodies. He set broken wills until they knitted again, more often than he made sick people well. The only people he scolded were the self-righteous, who obviously needed an alarm-clock to awaken them. He never sought to make people ashamed of themselves, unless he had to, as a first step toward restoring their self-respect on a sound basis. And he seems

not to have had the remotest idea that there was anything to be gained by trying to get even with men and women who had gone wrong.

To some it may seem that the medical view is too gentle to be effective. They think it amounts to saying of the sinner, "Poor fellow! He can't help himself! He's sick!" But that is because they have not thought this matter through. As a matter of fact, this is a more serious view of sin than the law ever takes. It recognizes disease, it makes a careful diagnosis, and it applies drastic remedies. Under the law, pardon means merely an act of executive clemency, which requires and makes no change in the criminal himself. Under psychiatric treatment, forgiveness denotes a process, slow or quick according to circumstances, which is not completed until wrong thinking has yielded its place to right thinking, the sick man has been restored to health, the sinner has become a changed man within. That seems to me to be the only thorough, sensible, realistic way of dealing with the most perplexing and ruinous obstacle that stands in the way of human well-being and happiness.

XIII.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

1.

A MORE effectual method of dealing with sin than to condemn and punish the sinner is to meet the influences which persuade him to wrong choices with counter-influences tending to restore him to moral health. This was Jesus' method. Combating sin along these lines was the principal ministry of mercy to which he dedicated his life. He was a great thinker and a great healer, but his main interest was in morals and religion. He cared chiefly about the ideals by which people lived, and their relations with God. For he understood that happiness depends much more on living in right relations with God and men than on clear logic or bodily well-being.

It is a surprising fact that to most of those familiar with his figure in the Gospels Jesus seems to be a living and active personality today. Indeed we may say that he exerts the strongest influence now at work in the world to bring men back from destructive courses into harmony of heart and will with the divine goodness.

The Church interprets this to mean that he lives, as the eternal Christ, transcending time and space, personally present and potent in every place and age. For myself I

accept this interpretation. It seems to me to meet the facts more adequately than any other.

I should then venture to suggest that the Comforter, whom the Fourth Gospel tells us that Jesus promised as the companion of the faithful after his departure, is none other than his historic figure, revivified by the Christian imagination. In imagination we are able to visualize him in relation to all the changing situations of the centuries. So we can usually judge what his bearing and policy would be in each situation. And we find guidance out of moral perplexities by following the answer which thus comes to us to the question, "What would Jesus do?"

It is evident that the Holy Spirit, God indwelling the universe which as Father He created, must have been always in the world from the beginning of time. So His coming after Jesus' death cannot have been His initial entry upon the scene. It can only be some especially effectual manifestation of His abiding presence. Even in the sciences, the imagination, under factual control, is used as an instrument for discovering truth. When a successful hypothesis is formulated in advance of its entire certification, it is the imagination which makes this formulation possible. So it does not detract at all from the objective reality of the living Christ to regard his figure, alive in our imaginations, as the very manifestation of the Holy Spirit which conforms to the conditions of Jesus' promise of the Comforter.

He declared that the Comforter would come after he himself had withdrawn from the sight of his disciples; and that the Comforter would bring to their minds all that he had said and done as a man, leading them into ever fuller comprehension of his message, loyalty to his

person, and accord with his principles. This has in fact been done for Christians ever since by the reverent imagination dwelling upon that glorious figure.

2.

But it is not necessary to agree with me entirely at this point in order to admit that Jesus really does seem to live and breathe when we approach him in the Gospels. Those who catch even a faint echo of his spirit are never able to think of him as a dead man. Of course this may be due simply to the vividness of the narratives, and Jesus' striking vitality as they depict him. Even so, it remains true that the remembered figure of Jesus, with this gripping appeal, is the most powerful religious influence in the world today.

In analyzing this power of his to win mankind away from sin, we may then properly speak of Jesus in the present tense, if for no better reason, because that seems to be the natural thing to do. We may understand this use of the present as referring either to the eternal Christ now actually living, or to Jesus dead and gone, but brought forward into our day by the imagination.

What is the secret, then, of Jesus' influence? It lies, first, in his sympathy with every man, no matter how far gone in evil he may be. By sympathy we do not mean pity. That is a mawkish use of the word. The root meaning of the word is fellow-feeling. Now every sinner feels that he is not as bad as he might be; that he does not in fact intend to be bad at all; and that there is still some hope for him. I have yet to meet anyone, however far gone in corruption, who failed to reveal these feelings, when speaking openly. And no sinner ever meets Jesus

—the man in the Gospels, not some stained-glass misrepresentation of him—without feeling that Jesus understands him, and is of the same opinion at precisely these points. He never points the finger of scorn or shame. He, too, believes that a bad man is better than he looks, and that there is still hope for him.

Further, Jesus is tactful. He never starts out talking to a man about his sins. He is not offensively holy. He has delicacy. He is a man of the world. That is, he is not a man of the cloister or sanctuary only, but a friendly man of the market-place and the out-of-doors.

Again, Jesus has that elusive personal quality called magnetism. So the fishermen found out whom he called from their nets to be his comrades, and fishers of men. Only a singularly attractive personality could have issued such upsetting invitations in so offhand a manner and have had them accepted. Certainly he was not effeminate, as many imaginary pictures of him in later Christian art would indicate. The friends he made and the life he lived show that he was what we call a man's man. Nor can he have been ugly to look at, as some have supposed on the weak ground of certain phrases of the Second Isaiah. That poet-seer of the exile lived five hundred years before Jesus. He can hardly have been thinking specifically of Jesus, or accurately describing him, when he wrote of the coming Servant of Jahve: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." That sort of transplanted aspersion is belied by everything we know about the persuasiveness of Jesus' personality.

The magnetism of Jesus consists, moreover, strangely enough, in his goodness. If one met him on some road

in Galilee or New England, one would not be moved to remark, "He must be a very good man." That is a depressing comment. One would probably say, instead, "Now there's a fine man! I wish I might know him better. There's something about him that I can't help liking." And the something one likes is his goodness. When goodness is repulsive it is spurious. Real goodness draws one to a man, and up to his moral and religious level while one is with him. You can hardly appreciate how radiant and cleansing is the quality of his manhood, until you have left him, and discover that you feel as if your soul had been rejuvenated.

Jesus does talk about faith and ideals, of course. But he talks about them as man to man, not as saint to sinner. And he talks about them only when, so to speak, he has been given a favorable opening. The words he then speaks are like a draft of cool water to the thirsty; like a key opening a door into a new and brighter world. It is all so encouraging, so care-dispelling, so sparkling and mysteriously lovely, this discourse of his; so surprising at first, so sensible when you think it over and put it to the test. Sometimes our surface minds do not grasp it, and it sinks down so deep that we think it has left no impression. But we like to listen to his voice. And we are ready to spend the rest of our lives trying to fathom his meaning. If we have once listened to him—to the man himself in the Gospels—we shall always want to go on hearing him. And he teaches us to understand God, to trust God, to live for God, to live in our wider selves, and to deny our little selves in order to be free for that high adventure. Sin ceases to be a problem when we sit at

Jesus' feet. It is hardly even a memory any longer. It simply isn't there.

3.

Dare we put our trust in the reality of this emancipation which Jesus brings, however? Not simply the tone of his voice or the light of his eye can convince us, if we are rational men. But there is nothing he says which does not accord with the results of careful, systematic thinking about man, the world, and God, if we take time to be philosophers before we make up our minds.

Usually we have not time enough for that, however. Most Christians owe the beginning of their faith to the unanalyzed personal influence of Jesus. It is only afterward that they trace out as far as they can the steps the mind must take if it is to come abreast of the heart.

Nor is this submission to personal influence as irrational as it sounds. For what it amounts to is that everything about Jesus convinces us, by obscure and almost instantaneous processes which are nevertheless fundamentally rational, that he is the expert whose competence and authority we can trust in the subject he professes. Our subsequent analysis of these processes is a matter of taking time to review the course first followed rapidly through by thoughts largely subconscious.

The reason is satisfied that Jesus knows what he is talking about, in part because of the way he lived as a man among men. Here is quintessentially admirable and successful living, from the qualitative standpoint of true personal attainment. And it was achieved strictly in line with the principles by which Jesus invites us also to live. For Jesus lived what he taught.

But the reason is even more fully satisfied in trusting him by the way he died. For Jesus' death proves that he himself believed utterly in his own message and its value to mankind, so that even death was not a price to hesitate about paying for the privilege of witnessing consistently for the truth to the very end, without impairing the efficacy of his teaching by any toning down or recanting under fire. If such a man would die in such a way for such a message, there is a genuine character-guarantee behind it which justifies us in accepting it with all our hearts, even while its complete validation by the intellect is, and may long remain, pending. In every realm of action we know by experience that we can more safely trust an adequate character-guarantee than any logical plausibility.

So the Cross certifies Jesus' sincerity, as his words, illustrated in his life, invite us almost irresistibly to credit his authority. But it does more than that. It moves the hearts of men, as no other spectacle of innocent suffering has ever done. It moves our hearts, because here was such transparent and entire innocency on the one hand, with such foul conspiracy and murder on the other. We feel that he died for us. For we should certainly never be persuaded fully to accept Jesus' doctrine of God if he had not made this climactic appeal to our hard heads and hearts by sealing his witness with his own blood.

Yet we feel that they who killed Jesus were our brothers. They were no worse than we. We, too, sin often the sins of policy. It is only by fortunate accident that they have not had such dire results in our case. And perhaps, in addition, we sin various sins of appetite, of which Jesus' murderers were guiltless; so that in effect we

are worse than they. This, then, is what sin means. It makes the innocent suffer. It puts Christ to death.

When we discover this meaning of sin, and how deeply tainted with it we are, that is repentance. When we turn away with loathing from our sins of appetite and of policy, and begin to follow, though from afar, the ideals of the Crucified, that is conversion. When habits of sin begin to give place to new habits of good-will and self-forgetful service, that is pardon—the healing of sin. When life moves steadily on the upgrade, with no more yielding to any downward pull, that is salvation—deliverance out of the bondage of the little self.

Repentance, conversion, pardon, salvation sometimes occur without any acknowledgment of the potency of the Cross, even without any knowledge of the story of the Cross. But they cannot occur apart from the principle of the Cross. For, if God is like Jesus, He is like Jesus even on the Cross. And He is ever appealing to the consciences of His children through every spectacle of innocency suffering at the hands of guilt, anywhere, at any time. For those who do know the Cross of Jesus, that principle shines out of the darkness of Calvary in such light that no eye can fail to recognize it.

4.

So we have arrived at an explanation of the fact, as Christian faith has always seen it, that the Cross of Jesus is the central transaction necessary for the salvation of mankind. But this explanation of ours is at variance with those which have been generally received. For ours is a variety of the moral influence theory; namely, that the

demonstrable effect of the Cross, and its only effect, so far as we can clearly understand, is upon men, to reconcile them to God; not upon God, to reconcile Him to men. To be fair, we must examine the more important theories of the opposite type, which attribute the significance of the Cross to its supposed efficacy with God in our behalf.

Paul is the great originator of these other theories. All of them are more or less directly derived from his teaching. Paul was at first scandalized by the fact of the Cross. It was a hideous stumbling-block. In seeking to understand it he turned it into the most glorious element of Christian faith.

So indeed it ought to be regarded. But Paul's mind was deeply imbued with the legalism of the orthodox Hebrew religion. Even when he reacted violently against this legalism, he did so in legalistic fashion. So, instead of simply recognizing the unique persuasive power of the Cross and letting it go at that, he carried over into the New Testament certain notions of sacrifice as a method of placating God, which are found in some of the more primitive portions of the Old Testament. Thus he invented the idea that Jesus had to suffer the penalty of the sins of the world, as a substitute for us to whom that penalty was due, in order to make it possible for God to restore His favor to us after we had alienated Him by our misdeeds.

This idea has been carried out in three different forms. According to one representation, God is wrathful and must be appeased. According to another, God is so holy that He can have no traffic with us, who have offended and violated His sanctity, save through a representative of our race as holy as He, but making himself the victim

of our iniquity. According to the third, God, as a just ruler, cannot permit the laws of His realm to be broken without punishing someone, guilty or innocent, for the breach, unless He is to allow His sovereignty to be undermined.

To all three forms alike of the idea of the death of Jesus as a satisfaction offered to God, three objections seem to me to be equally and fatally applicable.

In the first place, they all presuppose a difference in attitude toward mankind between the Father and the Son. And this difference in attitude is so great as to amount virtually to a difference in character. So what becomes of the basic Christian tenet, that God is like Jesus?

Again, all three represent God as standing outside of the world, and looking it over like a judge or assessor. But in that case the world can hardly be important enough to God for Him to love it as Jesus declares that He does.

Finally, all three involve an essentially dishonest factor of legal sleight-of-hand. The mere fact that a judge looked on the transaction with favor would not make it really fair for an innocent man to be executed in place of the actual criminal. In earthly courts we should call that defeating the ends of justice, not fulfilling them.

So we are left with no tenable alternative to the moral influence theory of atonement—that is, of the reconciliation of men to God, through the Cross of Jesus. Yet it is a persistent conviction of most theologians that the Cross must also have had some effect upon God as well as upon men. There is not lacking a Godward side, however, of this moral influence theory. We human beings never love our friends as much as we are capable of loving them, until we have suffered and sacrificed for them. But when

we have had to prove our love by paying for it, it comes to its full development and richness. Now we have said that God is like Jesus, even like Jesus on the Cross. That must mean that God suffers and sacrifices for mankind, as Jesus did when he died. God was on the Cross with Jesus. We may venture then reverently and with awe to declare that the effect of the Cross on God is to make His love for us perfect through suffering.

XIV.

God in Our Lives

I.

IF GOD is a person, then the religion of those who acknowledge Him will consist largely of their personal relations with Him. And one of the chief avenues for expressing a personal relationship is speech. Men talk to their friends. They also talk to God. Speech addressed to God is prayer.

But though we speak to God, we have no conversation with Him. He does not answer us back. Can it be then that He is not really there?

An answer often proposed to this objection is that in rare instances God has audibly answered questions, made suggestions, or given commands to His servants; that He has even appeared to them in visions.

Such experiences seem to have been genuine, to the extent at least that they were not consciously invented by the men who claimed to have them. And they carry great weight with the fortunate few to whom they have come. But an outsider may be forgiven for asking if there can be no other account than theirs of this matter.

Psychologists are strongly of the opinion that, in all the instances they have been in a position to examine, these

experiences were subjective, or, as we say, imaginary. Not by any means that they were deliberate fabrications; but that they were due to a welling up of ideas, tinged with emotion, from the lower recesses of the mind, beneath the threshold of consciousness, where they had been previously stored away by the conscious mind—a spontaneous emergence of these ideas called forth in all the color and tone of actuality by the mind's distress or elation in some crisis.

In support of this contention, the psychologists instance the variety of sights and sounds thus perceived, some at least of them claiming exclusive validity as the only real article, yet all of them being equally convincing to those to whom they came. In ancient Israel it was Jahve, the God-King of the twelve tribes, who was seen, His voice that was heard. Some Christians have seen Jesus; others, Mary the Mother of Jesus, or some lesser saint. Buddhists have seen and heard Gautama, Hindus Vishnu or Shiva, and so forth. If God is the author of all these impressions, it is evident that He must make Himself known under many different aspects, accommodating Himself to the expectation of the individual believer.

That He should do this is not in itself improbable, or unworthy of His greatness. Rather, it would seem to show the tactfulness of His ministering care. To say that, however, is to concede in effect the subjectivity of these impressions, at least on the human side of the experience. For it implies that God is not really like what He seems under these circumstances.

There is no reason why we should not suppose that God does purposely employ the resources of believers' minds, to make subjective impressions with all the vivid-

ness of substantive reality the vehicles of real messages from Him. But that possibility must remain in a region of surmise. An objection of more importance to laying any considerable stress on these extraordinary religious adventures lies in the very fact that they are extraordinary. There is nothing to indicate that the people to whom they happen are particularly noteworthy, above others who are not so fortunate, for their faith, understanding, or virtue. Most of us, even the best of us, go through life without ever seeing a vision or hearing a voice which purports to come from God. And it is the question of response in general, not of special response, which interests us.

Yet this question hardly strikes any habitually praying person as very serious. We men speak through our bodies, which are provided with vocal organs. God's body, as it were, is the universe. So far as we can learn, though there are many sounds in the universe apart from man, none of them is vocal, that is, adapted for articulate speech. But we do feel God's response in our hearts, at any rate occasionally. These inward impressions, which all may share, are often very definite. Sometimes they lead to a total change of direction in our lives. We have no trouble in supposing that they take the place of audible words from God's lips, so that He speaks all languages in using the one language of the heart.

The fact is that we do go on praying, and are not disturbed by the lack of responses which our senses can record and tabulate, if we do really believe on other grounds that God is, and cares about us. Prayer is a function of the human mind so natural, and, in times of trial or surprise at least, so nearly inevitable, as to deserve to be called instinctive. Its forms change in step with every advance

in religious understanding. But through all its changing forms prayer in its essence persists, as the speech of man to God.

Prayer occupied a central position in Jesus' practice and teaching of religion. He was neither a superstitious nor a credulous person. It cannot too often be repeated that he was a candid, daring, critical thinker. Yet he went on praying, and finding reality in prayer, and teaching other men to pray, in order that they too might find that supreme reality with which prayer kept him in touch. His example suffices in justification of the prayer habit, for all who accept his expert authority in faith and morals.

2.

Of course a common reply to the query concerning God's seeming silence in the one-sided conversations we carry on with Him is that He answers prayer by what He does, rather than by what He says. Sometimes He grants our petitions. Then He is saying Yes. Sometimes He does not grant them. Then He is saying No. Doubtless, when He says No, it is for sufficient reasons. This reply introduces us to the second difficulty, a graver one than the first, which we encounter in justifying prayer to our intelligence. What results is it legitimate to expect from prayer, and how are they accomplished?

One consequence of prayer, about which no one has any doubt, whether he prays or not himself, is its direct effect in tranquillizing him who prays. Prayer is a form of meditation. Meditation involves aloofness, for the time being, from the more or less frantic business of living. It means assuming a detached attitude—becoming a bystander instead of a participant, so that the rush and

noise pass us by, and we can recover quiet, in which to refresh ourselves for return to active duty. Meditation in the form of prayer is especially beneficial, because the fact that God is its object fills our minds with ideas of love, goodness, hope, and courage. Thus prayer is an effectual type of auto-suggestion. It is good for us up to that point in any event, whether there be any such person as the God upon whom we meditate or not.

But the peculiar thing about auto-suggestion is that it accomplishes little unless we believe that the helpful and uplifting suggestions which we give ourselves are true. There may be people who enjoy pretending to believe in make-believe, but most of us find that our minds don't work that way. I, for one, would dispense cheerfully with the self-hypnotic benefits of prayer, if I thought that was all there was to it. For I could find more interesting things than God to think about—cabbages and kings, for instance—if the cabbages and kings were real, and God were not.

But, at this advanced point of our discussion, I am taking it for granted that we all do agree that God is real. So, acknowledging that in proportion to the sincerity of our belief prayer does have a beneficial effect upon us as auto-suggestion, we must go ahead to look for results of prayer which involve God's activity, in contradistinction to our own.

3.

Prayer does give, then, to those who believe in Him to whom they pray, a genuine and comforting fellowship with God. He is there. He is always there; but in prayer we take time to realize His presence. When we

take time to realize His presence, it is to be expected that God will pay special attention to us. For that is what we do when people speak to us. Out walking with a friend, we may go along for miles beside him without thinking of him specifically, so long as he keeps silence, unless something happens to him to attract our attention without any words being spoken. But when he calls us by name, then we are at once aware of him.

Praying people have no doubt but that this expectation is fulfilled. It is fulfilled for many people in different places at the same time. For God is not limited, as we are, to one thought at a time. His omnipresence can hardly mean that He is diffused everywhere, like a mist, growing thinner as it stretches farther. If He is a person, it must mean that He is concentrated at every point of need or Godward aspiration throughout His creation. And what it means to have such a companion as God in a world as lonely as this, even if He did nothing for us but to be present and sympathetic, only those who have found Him can rightly know.

Further, prayer often yields definite guidance. In many cases this may be simply the result of a calming and clarification of our own minds, so that for ourselves we can discern issues more distinctly and devise plans more prudently. But that explanation does not seem to me to cover all the cases. On two or three occasions of anxious perplexity in my own life, I have followed a line which by no means commended itself to my judgment, because I felt urgently impelled to do so, after honest and humble seeking of the right direction from God. In each of those instances, I am able to see in retrospect that the line thus followed was the only right one under the circumstances.

Probably every Christian can recall similar experiences. In the language of the heart God does often tell us what to do, when we are at a loss, and in such darkness that we cannot see our hands before our faces.

4.

But there are times when we want more than fellowship and guidance—when we want definite things, and cannot get on without them. Then prayer takes the form of petition. Will God grant petitions for material things? How can He do so?

That God wants us to have the things we need for fulness of fruitful living in this world would seem to follow from the fact that He put us here. That He can hardly want us always to have the things we want would seem to follow from the fact that we are often the worst judges of our own real advantage. We are children, and our Father knows better than we do. That God will not give us things—riches or knowledge or character—which we can get for ourselves is obvious from the fact that He is a worker, and expects us to be workers, too. To hand out to us what we will not even reach for would be to put a premium on laziness, and to destroy our personalities, instead of developing them. But there are things which we actually do need, and cannot get for ourselves. What is God's attitude when we turn to Him for these things?

If we were to judge by many stories in the Bible, we should expect Him to work a miracle in our behalf. The word "miracle" means simply "deed of wonder." But in current usage it has the special meaning of an event produced apart from the normal methods which we call natural causation. Doubtless no one of us has ever witnessed

a miracle in this special meaning of the word. Wonderful things are always happening. But, so far as our observation goes, they are always capable of description, if we search deeply enough, in terms of natural cause and effect. Yet the Bible abounds in narratives of incidents in which natural law seems to have been completely set aside. Can we, as intelligent men and women of the twentieth century, credit these narratives, even though they are contained in the source documents of our religion?

The Bible does not stand alone in containing miracle stories. So do nearly all history-books coming from the pre-scientific ages. People used to be much more ready to accept the inexplicable, and to embroider tales of true events with marvelous legend, than they have been since the discovery of the reign of law. They were not to blame for a credulity inseparable from the state of knowledge in their time. But people who have no critical standards for assessing truth are not reliable witnesses. If we had been there when most of these things happened, we should probably have seen much farther into the situation than they did, and have given a different account of it.

This well-warranted skepticism of our era leads the majority of us to dismiss most of the miracle stories in the Bible from serious consideration. They report truly enough, no doubt, the impression made at the time by sundry surprising events. But the explanations they offer are probably untrue to the facts. Even in connection with Jesus this viewpoint, characteristic of sober modern thought, wholly destroys the evidential value which his alleged miracles were once supposed to possess. We should no more believe in him because he walked on water or raised the dead, than we should accept the late Mr.

Houdini, or some other magician, as the Son of God, because his performances were incomprehensible to us. It is his character that attaches us to Jesus, not the strange events of his life because of their strangeness. Miracles have become a hindrance rather than a help to faith.

Yet we must not be dogmatic on this subject. Dogmatism is equally objectionable on either side. It is no more reasonable to deny that a unique event occurred, if it is otherwise well-attested, simply because it was unique, than it would be to deny that a person like Jesus or Shakespeare or Lincoln or Edison lived, simply because these men in their several ways were unique, too. Certainly none of them can be explained without remainder in terms of his heredity and environment. Yet they did live. If a thing happened, it happened, whether we like it or not. The only way to find out whether it did actually happen is by applying historical tests.

In applying such tests in the case of Jesus, as represented in the Gospel narratives, we have two classes of miracles to deal with: things that happened to him, and things he did. Of the things that happened to Jesus, the most important claims made are his birth of a virgin, his vision at his baptism, and his resurrection. The vision need not detain us. It falls within the class of experiences which we have seen reason to regard as primarily subjective. The virgin birth is recorded in only two Gospel passages. It is never elsewhere referred to in the early records. And these two passages are incapable of being harmonized with each other. If we believe in it, then, it must be as a matter of faith, admittedly unsupported by consistent historical testimony.

The resurrection, on the other hand, has a mass of evi-

dence behind it which it is exceedingly hard, to say the least, to discredit or to explain away. It is an enigma. But it is attested in dozens of ways by all sorts of witnesses. The very survival and triumphant spread of the Christian movement after the crucifixion is a massive monument of the disciples' entire confidence in this miracle. In the present state of our knowledge, we can by no means deny that it occurred, even if we do not see our way clear to affirming it positively.

Of the things Jesus did, some are as enigmatic as the resurrection, and as unsupported by apparently competent witness as the virgin birth. But outstanding among these deeds attributed to him are his innumerable acts of healing. A very large proportion of these are entirely credible on scientific grounds.

We have noted that his attitude toward sin was not that of the judge, but that of the psychiatrist. Sin is not the only trouble to which the best approach is through analysis and correction of morbid mental conditions. Disease is frequently produced by unhealthy states of mind. Psychoses, directly traceable to exclusively mental causes, can mimic almost every known malady, and often cause just as much suffering to their unwilling victims as if they were the diseases they simulate. It seems safe to say that Jesus' technique as a physician of bodies, as well as of wills, was that of a psychiatrist. He could not have formulated his principles of healing in the technical jargon of modern psychiatry, to be sure; for it had not yet been invented. But they amounted to the same thing.

It needs to be added that we are still a long way from knowing how far the rule holds that mental disturbances are responsible for illness. It may go a good deal farther

than we can yet state with assurance. All of Jesus' healing miracles may have been possible under this rule. If that be true, we can easily believe that they occurred.

But in our day miracles, in the usual special sense of the term, do not take place, so far as I can learn. It is not by displacing or interrupting natural law that God grants our petitions nowadays, whatever He may have done in the past.

Yet He often grants them. Nor is there any reason why He should have to break His own rules, in order to do His proper work as our Father. When I provide bread for my children's table, no rules are broken, no miracle occurs. I earn the money, and I buy bread, which a baker made, from grain which a farmer grew, in fields where the natural laws of sun and rain and germination and ripening held undisputed sway. Yet there would be no bread for my children if I did not come into this entirely natural process, and direct it for their benefit. Doubtless in the same fashion God can use the processes which He has stabilized along undeviating tracks of cause and effect. Through them He can achieve results for His children, which could not take place without His direction. But in His children's own interest He would not thrust these results upon them, before they had learned to turn to Him and ask for them.

But some of the things we most need are dependent upon a favorable disposition in other human beings. What can God do about that? Sometimes nothing at all. He never coerces the freedom even of His disobedient and selfish children, when they resist His influence. But at least He can bring influence directly to bear upon them. That working of God within men's minds is one of the

operations which the Church understands to be the function of the Holy Spirit. And doubtless in more instances than not, if what we seek is also in the common interest, the influence which God brings to bear on others, in response to our petitions, will cause the change in human policies which we desire.

5.

How shall we pray? There are many ways. Perhaps every earnest desire is an unformulated prayer. Prayer is an art, like living itself. Every artist has a different technique from every other. The formal prayers we teach to the young, and the liturgies we use in the churches, are chiefly educational in aim, to give to the God-seeking impulse of all mankind a habit and a channel of reverent expression. But the words we employ are not the substance of our prayers. Nor are such accidents as our posture in praying of any significance, except as they induce a fitting mood in us. The essence of the matter is that, with assurance and in gladness for the privilege, we talk to God, each of us for himself, as child to Father, as friend to Friend.

XV.

God's Will on Earth

1.

MATERIAL things and earthly conditions are of real importance to us, though not of so great importance as moral values. And if they are important to us, the fact that we are important to God makes them important to Him also. He is concerned with persons in their natural environment. As persons, we are His children. He must take an interest in the circumstances surrounding us, because they have a good deal to do with the way we turn out.

A good deal, but not everything. For we have always to remember that we are free to make something different of our circumstances, and something better if we will. We may not be able to change them radically. But the way we freely choose to react to them will determine whether their influence is to be beneficial or injurious, and whether we shall be enslaved by them or shall exert ourselves in such mastery of our destiny that our expanding personality will rise above the limitations of circumstance.

The life of Jesus is an instance in point. He was born a member of the artisan class, and a child of a narrow-minded, tradition-bound Church, in one of the least

valued tiny provinces of the Roman Empire. He remained a poor man, a Jew, and a Palestinian, all his days. Yet he made himself so much bigger than that tight old-fashioned framework which seemed to bind him down that the world cannot help regarding him as at the lowest estimate one of the most creative figures in history, and in his thinking so far ahead of his time that we are still far from catching up with him.

But most people are not made of such stern and sturdy stuff as Jesus, Napoleon, Lincoln, Shakespeare, who mounted from next to nothing and every discouragement to ambition, until they achieved world eminence. Most of us give in more easily than we resist and hold out. Most of us seem to lack the energy to assert ourselves and conquer fate, instead of being conquered by it. The only true meaning of fate is as a name for the lot assigned to us in life at the beginning. If heredity and environment are against us, we are apt to submit to their dictation. So, if well-being and personal integrity are ever to be provided for the masses of mankind, we must do what we can to improve the conditions of their birth and rearing.

Sometimes we forget that God's interest and concern are not restricted to those who acknowledge that He is their Father and Friend. It was the perpetually recurring sin of the ancient Jews as a people that they supposed that the God of all the earth would take care of them and give them special privileges, but would do nothing for their Gentile neighbors if He could get out of it. Against that pride, subtly corrupting their relations with other peoples, the prophets were forever inveighing. And

Jesus, the greatest of the prophets, never neglected an opportunity to force home the truth that God is equally the Father of all men, so that special privilege is but the corollary of a special responsibility for service to the general good of the race.

There is little we can do to remedy defects or active evils of heredity. A man can be born only once, except in a figurative sense. After he has once been born, there may be a melancholy interest, but there is no practical point, so far as he himself is concerned, in going back to check up his father and mother as to their fitness for parenthood. But obviously there is much that we can do to remedy defects and active evils in environment. We can make our neighborhoods, our countries, and the world better places than they now are to live in, more favorable to the growth of personal character, less provocative of wrong-doing, and less productive of misery. The threads of life are needlessly tangled and snarled in most localities.

In part this is due to sins of selfishness. But in a very considerable part, also, it is due to bungling. We can straighten out most of the threads if we will. It may take a long time, but it can be done. And the work will go ahead more quickly, the farther it gets under way. For many people are at first indifferent or even hostile to what they regard as interference with the good old ways of doing things. But they will lend a hand as soon as they see that it is not a matter of snooping and meddling, but an honest and intelligent effort to correct causes of suffering to many, which are of no advantage to any.

2.

But what has all this to do with religion? Religion is a conscious relationship to the personal factors in our environment, as such. And human beings are among these personal factors. Right relations with our fellowmen are as much a part of religion as right relations with God. We cannot be right with God unless we make every possible effort to be right with men. Other human beings, though in one sense separate from us, are in another sense parts of our very selves—our wider selves—since they are parts of our world, and the whole world, in all its parts, affects our being to some degree. It is part of our legitimate self-interest, therefore, not to be selfish in our bearing toward them, but to do everything we can, even at the expense of our little selves, to help them.

To supplement this theoretical statement of the case, we have to think of the example of Jesus. For we have chosen him as the expert whom we will trust and follow in matters of religion. And he went about doing good. He lent a helping hand even to the most loathsome if they would let him. And he helped even more deeply and lastingly by teaching his disciples also how essential it was for their own development in harmony with the purpose of life that they should be constantly about their Father's business of human betterment. It was this project of his for the setting right of conditions within the control of human intelligence and good-will which afforded the background for one of the most telling phrases of the model prayer he taught his followers: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth."

So the religious man, as Jesus gives us to understand,

must be actively devoted to the task of clearing away the removable causes of human wretchedness and vice. Some of the causes are not removable. We cannot keep other people from making wrong choices if they want to. There will doubtless always be sin and its cruel consequences. We cannot prevent natural catastrophes from occurring. There will probably always be earthquakes, fire, and flood, and people who suffer from them. But much tendency toward sin can be prevented or checked. Many precautions, usually overlooked, can be taken against natural catastrophes. And a huge portion of human woe is due to faults in the organization of society, which can certainly be corrected. The truly religious man, because he is religious, will be laboring to correct such faults, and to build a sound and just social order. To help build such an order is one way of being constructive. And we have seen that constructiveness is the ultimate and essential meaning of goodness.

Christian history reveals what seems at first to be a strange failure for many centuries to overtake the thought of Jesus on this subject. The idea of social progress is hardly two hundred years old. And even then it came to light outside of the Church. Organized Christianity has taken it over from secular sources. But it must be remembered that these secular sources sprang from a civilization which had long been under Christian influence.

The official Christian attitude toward evil other than one's own sin used to be that one should endure it patiently, as being necessarily incidental to life in this vale of tears, and a discipline in preparation for heaven. There alone the injustices of earth would be righted.

That is still a proper and comforting attitude to take,

no doubt, toward ills which cannot be remedied, if we believe in a future life. But it is sheer cowardice and weak-mindedness, in so far as it is a question of ills for which courage and ingenuity could find remedies. Emphatically, Jesus did not enjoin long-suffering in precept or practice. Instead he started a revolt against the spirit of selfishness which is at the bottom of social wrongs. He laid the foundations for the reconstruction of human institutions from within, by the substitution of qualitative standards of living for the gross values of quantity.

But, oddly enough, all the time that the Church was talking about patient endurance as a Christian virtue, it was unconsciously giving the lie to its own words by the effect it was having, the reforms it was vigorously promoting, in the actual social situations with which it dealt. Not only did it commend charity toward the poor. It also founded and operated hospitals for the sick and refuges for the oppressed. It contributed a not inconsiderable share to the undermining of the autocracy of Rome. It addressed itself successfully to the tedious and dangerous task of civilizing our barbarian ancestors in Northern Europe. It kept alive the only surviving flame of antique science and philosophy through the dark ages. And it cleared the ground for a new and vastly more imposing edifice of learning.

Often, to be sure, the Church fought against new truth, and fresh vindications of the rightful liberties of the common people. But at the same time it kept right on laying the groundwork of systematic thinking and popular aspirations, upon which these innovations were based. It practiced the principle of social progress long before it adopted the idea, or even heard of it. So much has been

written about the oppressions of circumstance and the rigidity of dogma of which the mediæval Church especially was guilty that we are likely to overlook the reverse of that hateful picture—the gigantic services rendered by the Church to the very interests which its leaders were apparently in a conspiracy to defeat. The Christians of those earlier times builded better than they knew. The actual discrepancy between their deeds and the example of of Jesus was by no means so glaring as it may appear at first glance.

It is a serious question how far the Church ought to go in directly sponsoring movements for human betterment in this world. It seems probable that the undertaking to work out the rules of social progress, in harmony with the principles of Jesus, is so important and difficult in itself that organized Christianity had better leave the details, in the main, to Christians functioning as citizens, not as Churchmen. It is gravely to be doubted whether a professional class like the Christian ministry, living in an atmosphere of preoccupation with the guidance of individuals in their personal concerns, can be generally competent to deal also with complex questions of politics and economics. These questions would seem to require the employment upon them of experts in the social sciences.

But usually the Churches have to serve as pioneers in these fields, when they see that things need to be done, in order to start out their constituency on the right path as citizens. In providing schools and hospitals, sponsoring legislation for the protection of labor and of women and children, and making some sort of first draft of plans for social reorganization on a more ambitious scale, it is the Church, led by its ministers, which is as a gen-

eral rule first in the field. Presently the state, or some association of laymen, relieves the Church of this burden. And from then on the work usually goes ahead faster and is better done than before. Nevertheless most social reforms would never be started if it were not for the initiative of religious men, working through religious channels, for the religious purpose of making this world a better, safer, morally more favorable place for God's children to live in.

Before specific changes can be advocated by social reformers with any chance of success, however, two things have to be done. The needs of change and the points at which they come up have to be clearly shown; and the general principles to be observed in working out the details satisfactorily have to be brought to bear upon the public conscience. It seems to me that the function of organized religion lies in doing these two things.

3.

What the needs are anyone can see with half an eye. There is, first, an enormous disproportion between effort and income in the business world; even between income and capacity. The present distribution of wealth, producing palaces at one extreme and slums which are hotbeds of disease and vice at the other, is grossly unfair. It would be better for everyone, including the rich, if this could be rectified. And of course it can be, if we go at it sanely, fearlessly, and with unremitting vigor.

Second, democracy is an attempt, the most promising yet made, to state the truths of right human relations as to government, as they are implied in the teachings of Jesus and verified in experience. But democracy threatens to

degenerate into a tyranny, either of bosses or of an unthinking mob, on account of the failure of the party system in most states of the European culture to grapple with real problems realistically and to train citizens in thorough civic thinking. It is this lack of realism which has given political corruption its golden opportunity.

Third, the development of sentimental nationalism since the seventeenth century has resulted in a situation in which war is perpetually imminent, is prosecuted on a larger scale than ever before when it does occur, and is glorified in nominally Christian lands as no pagans have ever glorified it. Yet war is unnecessary, wicked, and useless.

Fourth, the different races of the world have been brought closer to one another of late than in any earlier period. Men unlike in color have always regarded one another with unreasoning dislike and suspicion. Yet all these races have to live from now on as next-door neighbors, with much overlapping and intermingling. Nothing but common sense, based on information and buttressed by a vivid realization of the Christian tenet of all-inclusive human brotherhood, can prevent these contacts from breeding conflicts which must in their outcome be disastrous to every race and all their members.

Finally—to omit other problems which might be enumerated, but of which these may be taken as typical —the solution of all these problems, in the direction of decent living conditions for all of God's children, rests back upon the necessity of education. Education does not mean mere memorizing of information. It means training in the capacity to think—to observe and analyze facts, and to come to reasonable conclusions, on the basis of all

available facts pertinent to the matter in hand. Ill will is doubtless responsible for much that hinders the coming of the Kingdom. But stupidity has an even heavier responsibility to bear.

These are religious matters which we have been discussing. They all have to do directly with the doing of God's will on earth. We cannot evade them, or discharge our obligation along these lines merely by praying, if we are honest with ourselves, our neighbors, and God. It is a vital part of religion to hold firmly to an ideal of right relations among all men, and to pursue that ideal with hard thinking and hard work, using our brains, in consultation with other men and women of good-will, to make practicable plans for human betterment, and then setting our hands to the task of carrying them into execution.

XVI.

Corporate Religion

I.

RELIGION is only at its beginning so long as it is a matter merely of one man in his relations with God and his fellow-men. It does not approach maturity until it becomes a matter of the collective living and cooperative effort of a number of men who are bound together by sustaining a similar relation to God and a common conviction of religious duty. Among followers of Jesus this corporate aspect of religion finds its fulfilment in the Christian Church.

Our English word "Church" is a curious one. It comes from a Greek word, but is used to translate another Greek word with a quite different meaning. The word from which "Church" comes means "The Lord's House"—that is, a building used for worship. But the word which we usually translate "Church" means not a building but an assembly, or society. When we speak of a building used for worship as a Church, it is not, oddly enough, in fidelity to the root significance of the term, nor because of any special sanctity in the building itself, but simply in consideration of the fact that a society of Christians is housed in it.

It is normal, and almost inevitable, that people who have things in common should seek one another out and combine interests, instead of following separate ways. There are two grounds for this tendency. First, we are all at war with loneliness. And it is best overcome by forming alliances and friendships with others whose bearing is sympathetic to ours. Second, most of the interests which men are capable of sharing with one another require some sort of action. And collective action is more effective than uncoordinated individual actions. So the causes which have brought Churches into being are the same as lie behind all other societies of whatever sort.

The things Christians have in common are threefold. First, they hold a common viewpoint. In one form or another they all ascribe supreme religious importance to the leadership of Jesus. Second, they have a common enthusiasm. For the typical Christian attitude toward Jesus is not one of mere intellectual endorsement of his authority. It goes on to include a devoted and even passionate loyalty to him, like a man's loyalty to his closest earthly friend. Third, they have a common task. For it was a vital part of Jesus' teaching that his followers should carry on his work in the world. As to what that work mainly is, and how it ought to be done, there is a variety of opinions. But that there is work for Christians to do in their Master's behalf, which is entitled to first place among their obligations, all of them agree.

So far as we have yet seen, then, any association of human persons, based upon loyalty to Jesus, may be a Church. Of course some such associations do not claim or desire that status. They may be branches of some Church, for instance, like a parish young people's society, or agen-

cies of several Churches jointly, like various philanthropies, rather than Churches in themselves. Nevertheless for each individual his Church is actually that society, whether it call itself a Church or not, which is for him the main channel of his fellowship as a Christian with other Christians.

Now that is a very broad definition indeed. It includes no mention of orders or sacraments. It excludes no society which is engaged in any type of worship and work in the name of Christ, and which chooses to call itself a Church. It is so broad a definition that a vast majority of Christians would undoubtedly reject it. That majority would not perhaps include, however, the Christians who think most freely and speak most candidly.

2.

Most Christians, however, numerically speaking, hold that Jesus founded a Universal Church, to which he gave a divine constitution, so that that only can be a true Church in which this constitution is regularly observed. But there are a number of different theories as to what this constitution is.

First, there is the theory of apostolic succession. According to this theory, Jesus consecrated his inner circle of twelve disciples as the first bishops of his Church, with power to ordain ministers of lower grades, and to consecrate from among these such colleagues as they might choose to share in their own office. Judas's place was taken by Matthias, and Paul was added by special divine appointment to the number of the original Apostles. The Apostolic Church, as thus constituted, set up by divine authority the subordinate orders of elders, or priests, and of deacons.

So in our day those only are true ministers of Christ who have been made deacons, elders, or bishops by the laying on of the hands of bishops who have come down from the Apostles in an unbroken line of succession through the laying on of hands, a rite instituted for this purpose at the outset. And those only are true Churches in which such ministers officiate. Other Christian societies may be made up of sincere believers, and may be fruitful in good works under God's blessing. But they are not really Churches. This is the position of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and of the Catholic party in the Anglican Church.

Second, there is the theory of the Petrine succession, or Papal supremacy. According to this theory, when Matthew records that after the Great Confession Jesus said to Simon, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:13-19), what is meant is that Jesus was bequeathing his own sovereignty over organized Christianity to Peter and his successors forever. It is further alleged that Peter later went to Rome and became the first Bishop of that city, and that the subsequent Bishops of Rome are therefore his successors, not only in that see, but in supreme autocratic authority over all Christians. This is the position of the Roman Catholic Church. It is held in conjunction with a form of the theory of apostolic succession. But Rome denies that the Anglican Church preserved that succession without interruption at the period of the English Reformation. So it maintains that the catholic pretensions of the Anglican Church are unwarranted; it is, in fact, not a Church at all.

Third, there is the theory of presbyterial succession. Presbyter means elder, or priest. According to this theory,

there were in apostolic times only two orders in the Christian ministry, elders and deacons—"elder" and "bishop" having been originally synonymous terms, two names for the same office. Those only are true ministers of Christ who have been made deacons or elders by the laying on of the hands of elders who have come down from the Apostles in an unbroken line. This position is associated with the name of Calvin, and was long held among the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. It has also been held among the Methodists, after they broke away from the Church of England. But it has now, in the main, been abandoned. It is without any powerful advocacy today.

Fourth, and by way of revolt from all these theories which tend to exclude great numbers of Christians from valid Christian fellowship, there is the Congregational theory. According to this theory, authority as to doctrine, government, and discipline in the Church which Jesus founded was vested from the earliest times in the lay people of each individual Church, functioning as a religious democracy. Several or many Churches might, and actually did, habitually counsel together as to teaching, program, and ways and means, adopt identical measures by common consent, and choose officers to oversee the joint undertakings of the association. But there was nothing rightly requiring obedience on the part of any one of the Churches to these proceedings, if that Church did not wish to confirm the action taken by a meeting to which it had sent delegates. For each Church was free, and a law unto itself. And so ought all Churches to be. There is no proper exclusive test of a true Church, which men

know how to apply. We must recognize the right of every Christian society to call itself a Church, and leave it to God to decide whether this right has been properly exercised.

3.

Now I am heartily in accord with this Congregational theory, as to its outcome; but simply because it seems sensible and fair—not on historical grounds. The fact is that an historian can find no exclusive grounds for any one of these theories. There seems to have been much confusion and variation in the practice of the Churches through the first couple of centuries. On the whole, they apparently conformed more nearly to the Congregational type than to any other. But, on the other hand, the Apostles did certainly exercise a supervisory and directing ministry over all the Churches, and not by virtue of any general election. To this ministry a considerable degree of authority was attached. But the theory of apostolic succession was not clearly formulated until Cyprian, about the middle of the third century. The theory of the Petrine succession did not come to light until very much later. The Presbyterial theory was practically unheard of until the Reformation.

What seems to have occurred, so far as unbiased historical research can discover, was something like this. No one can vouch for the details; but the general movement is clear.

Among Jewish converts the synagogue organization was taken over for Christian congregations, because it was familiar. Synagogues, and Churches of the synagogue

type, were governed by a board of elders. The elders were set apart for their duties by a solemn and impressive rite of the laying on of hands of their seniors in office.

Among Gentile converts many of the Christian congregations seem to have been incorporated under the Roman Empire as private corporations, in certain convenient legally recognized classifications, usually as burial or cemetery associations. The president of such a corporation was in current Roman usage officially entitled the episcopus, or bishop.

As Jews and Gentiles came together the two titles, elder (Jewish) and bishop (Gentile), came to be used at first interchangeably, since they designated the same functions. But as Churches grew in size the need was felt for a chairman of the board of elders who could head up the business of the society. To this chairman the title "bishop" came at length to be by custom applied exclusively, because "episcopus" means "overseer" or "superintendent."

When there were several Churches in one region, one bishop was sooner or later made the chief executive for all Christian interests thereabouts, as a matter of administrative efficiency, and he came to be known as the bishop of that region. When the Churches of several neighboring regions felt the need of a similar overseer, or chairman of the bishops, such an officer was appointed, and was named "archbishop" or "head-overseer." The residence of an archbishop was usually in the chief city of the section or country. An archbishop living in a metropolis—that is, the chief city among many great cities—received the complimentary title of "metropolitan."

The Metropolitan of Rome, living at the capital of the

civilized Western world, achieved greater importance and influence than any other because of his high position at the court of the Christian Cæsars. And after the Fall of Rome in 476 he inherited much of the influence and some of the glamor of the Cæsars, as the principal magnate still residing in that city, of which the very name inspired awe after its many generations of world-dominion. The theory of Papal supremacy was invented, on the basis of a single figurative New Testament text literally interpreted, in order to justify in theological terms the sovereignty which the Popes had actually built up through a natural political and social evolution. There is no respectable historical evidence for any visit of Peter to Rome, much less for his having been the first bishop there. At the outset it was Paul, not Peter, whom the Roman Christians acknowledged as the founder of their Church.

The trend of events above summarized confirms an impression which no one can help having who has studied the Gospel stories of Jesus' life with an open mind. It is hardly going too far to say that it is absurd to think of Jesus, as we find him there, founding an organization, and laying down rules for its government all through the future. He was not an institutionalist. The men whom he most sharply criticized were the institutionalists among his fellow-countrymen, the officials of the static Jewish Church. What he founded was a movement, not an organization. What he laid down were principles, not rules. He knew that he could trust the leaders of his movement to work out rules from time to time, as occasion demanded, in harmony with these principles. His authority cannot legitimately be claimed for any one type of Church organization.

4.

We are confronted nowadays with a huge number of different sects, all of them Churches, but some of them refusing that name to others. In so far as these sects base their differences upon divergent theories of the original organization of the Church, they seem to be without justification. In so far as their differences are due to diversity of doctrine on other points, we must admit the right and duty of every man to hold to the truth as he sees it, and the possibility of intellectual disagreement by equally competent thinkers at any point. But in so far as such differences tend to hinder recognition of the devotion of all Christians to one Master, and their acceptability to God as His children and the followers of His Son; and in so far as they put obstacles in the way of those reforms in the social order which we have seen to be required by the spirit of Jesus, we must deplore sectarianism in others and abandon it for ourselves.

That is not to say that there is no room for differences among Christians. In truth differences are inevitable. And perhaps it is better that there should be Churches with different types of teaching, of worship, and of government, corresponding with the variety of temperaments in Christians, than that anything like enforced uniformity should be attempted. It is as natural to express religion in different ways as it is to prefer different styles of clothing. The born Quaker, for instance, could never feel at home in an Episcopal Church. The born Episcopalian could never be happy in a Quaker meeting. Yet both may be true Christians. And both Churches may be doing God's work in the world in a way pleasing to Him.

When both realize this, and are willing to live together peaceably as good neighbors, and to do together whatever the interests of religion and righteousness require of them jointly, then we have all the Christian unity we need. But when a man puts the welfare of his own Church above that of the Church Universal, the invisible yet increasingly potent fellowship of all the followers of Jesus, or when he identifies the policies of his own Church exclusively with the will of God, then we see in him a spirit of divisiveness and strife which is the opposite of the brotherly spirit of the Master he professes to serve. And his Christianity will diminish in proportion to the increase of that spirit of bias in him.

The requirements for admission and good standing as a Church member vary with the several Churches. Every Church has a right to require that its members shall conform to the standards it has chosen to set up. No one ought to feel bound, however, to remain in a Church of which the special standards seem to him to be unwarranted, or to interfere with his religious development according to the laws of his own nature. Sometimes a man brought up in one Church gets the vision of God for the first time by joining some other Church. There is no disloyalty in such a change, provided loyalty be measured, as it ought to be, in terms of allegiance to Christ, who has the only valid claim on the Christian heart. Surely it is not too much to say that, broadly speaking, and with due account of the many types of human consciousness which not any one mold can fit, one Church is as good as another.

But for each of us there will be one Church that is better than any other, so far as he himself is concerned. That Church he ought to join. For no man can be a

full-fledged Christian, or for that matter a full-fledged person, unless his religion is brought into action through frequent and cherished association with other religious persons of like type, and his morals are buttressed and his loneliness and trouble are relieved by habitual comradeship with others who share his aspirations.

Is it possible to be a Christian at all, without being a Churchman? Possible, no doubt; but not probable. It is possible for a man to live all alone on a desert island. But it is probable that he will fail, and die before his time. It is possible for a man to follow Jesus all by himself. But it is probable that he will not get very far, or accomplish very much, even if he does not soon fall away entirely in discouragement. Faith lives normally in fellowship and upon it. Religion is a matter of personal relations, not of solitude. And a right relation with God will lead a man in most instances into a right relation with other servants and children of God, in one household of Christian worship and work.

XVII.

The Church at Worship

I.

WORSHIP and work are the counterbeats of the pendulum of religion. When the pendulum stops beating, religion is at a standstill. A like alternation runs all through life: rest and effort, impression and expression, reception and transmission.

Every Church maintains stated appointments for collective worship. Sometimes the importance of these appointments is given such one-sided emphasis that righteousness comes to be regarded as consisting principally in habitual Church attendance. Even so dangerous an exaggeration as that, however, should not be allowed to prejudice us against recognizing that regularity in public worship is normally a vital aspect of religious practice. It affords an opportunity and lays a foundation for periodical consideration of Christian truth and realignment with God and the ideals of Jesus. To go to Church regularly is only a beginning of the religious life. But beginnings are essential. We never get anywhere unless we start.

In most Protestant Churches, the pulpit occupies a central position, both architecturally and in the thought of the congregation. The pulpit stands for instruction and

stimulation by the spoken word. Protestantism has put the pulpit forward in advance of other elements of worship, as a sign of its confidence in the responsive intelligence of the congregation.

Catholicism believes as profoundly as any Protestant denomination, and more profoundly than some of them, in the reasonableness of faith. But the Catholic system reached its norm of worship at a time when sufficient education to warrant independent religious judgment was confined to a small minority, chiefly made up of the clergy. Such a work as Thomas Aquinas's *Summa* represents the most alert and progressive learning of the middle ages. But the Church rightly judged in that epoch that such learning would be debased rather than appreciated if attempts were made to expound it philosophically to the general mind. So preaching was the exception rather than the rule, and worship was organized around the sacraments instead of a sermon.

But Protestantism arose simultaneously with the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery, when the average man was at last coming into his own. And its rebellion against Rome was engineered largely on intellectual grounds. So it was natural for its leaders to take the masses into their confidence, making a heavier demand than had been made by Christianity since the Apostolic Age upon their thoughtfulness, in order to enlist their support. And ever since the pulpit has been in the foreground of Protestant religious consciousness.

This is perhaps in a measure to be regretted. For the pulpit has in fact often meant a disproportionate appeal to the emotions. It has put a premium upon eloquence and oratory, in which sound often counts for more than

sense. It has trained the laity to be critical listeners, sometimes at the expense of creative religious activity. And it has tempted many a preacher into demagogic byways. A preacher who willingly exploits his elocutionary gifts to win renown is as vulgar as a clown and as dangerous as a quack.

This is not to say, however, that the pulpit should be held in low esteem, or relegated to the background. There is need of more teaching, rather than of less, if religion is to be as helpful as it ought to be. But the accent ought to fall more upon teaching, less upon rhetoric and ornate exhortation, than is sometimes the case. And in properly ordered worship the pulpit, while still in the foreground, will not fill the whole of it, but will share equal prominence with altar, sacraments, and prayer.

The high point of worship is not the sermon. For in the sermon the leader is speaking as a prophet to the congregation. The high point is prayer. For in prayer the congregation is speaking to God, either directly or through the leader as its priest. Most hymns are prayers. All prayers are addressed to God, and should be meant for Him. Pulpit eloquence is never so out of place as when it is carried over into a public prayer. For God is not a public meeting. He is our King and Father. Oratory is not called for in presenting to Him our homage and petitions. To persuade or scold the congregation through the medium of prayer is virtually to deny that God is present or listening. It substitutes a subjective impression upon the human audience for realization of the august objective presence of the Divine Being.

What forms prayer should take in public worship is a

matter of taste and feeling, upon which any rules would be impertinent. At the extremes of informality and of formalism one can often feel the pulsing sincerity of an actual contact established between men and their Creator. And at both extremes one can sometimes feel a heartless unreality. In general, public prayers should be even more carefully prepared than sermons. Few preachers have the ill-bred boldness to talk to their congregations on the spur of the moment without painstaking forethought. God is more important than any congregation.

2.

Besides sermons and prayers, most Christian Churches observe also certain sacraments; at least the two which can be clearly traced in the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. These hold a high place in the veneration of most Christians.

But we must preface any study of the sacraments by acknowledging that they are not strictly essential. For there are many truly religious men and women who have never received either sacrament. And there are some Christian Churches, giving evidence both of sincerity and of effectiveness, which do not observe them. To name only two examples, there are no sacraments in the usual sense of the word among the Quakers or among the Christian Scientists. But probably no honest man will deny that there are devout and saintly Christians in both these bodies, who are manifestly in right relationship with God, and take a truly Christlike attitude toward their fellowmen. The sacraments may then be of great value. But to omit them would not be fatal to religion.

Baptism is the usual rite of initiation into the Christian Church. That it should be uniformly practiced in all Churches seems desirable as a concession to the many Christians to whom it would appear that there was at least something perilously irregular about the religious status of any person who had not received it.

For several bodies of Christians maintain that in the act of baptism the person receiving it is given rebirth as a child of God.

Baptism is administered by the application of water, through immersion, sprinkling, or pouring, to the person to be baptized, while a dedicatory phrase is pronounced in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are named. It is given in most Churches not only to adults but also to infants, on their parents' promising to bring them up in the faith.

It is probable that the Trinitarian phrase is a later modification of some simpler formula used in the early Church. It is virtually certain that the water was at first uniformly administered by immersion, except perhaps in the case of the dangerously ill; and that adults only were admitted to this sacrament.

Baptism is of course a ceremonial washing, the suggested cleansing of the body typifying the washing away of evil from the heart. Jesus borrowed the usage from John the Baptist and earlier leaders of Jewish religion. He was himself averse from formalism, like all the prophets. It can hardly be doubted that he would sanction this sacrament in any convenient form, as a fitting sign of entrance into the Christian fellowship, but certainly without admitting that it had any magical efficacy.

3.

The Holy Communion was originally intended as a token of Christian unity under Jesus' self-sacrificing leadership. But it has ironically enough been much more a subject of contention even than baptism. We remember how, at the last supper before his Crucifixion, Jesus broke bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my body," and passed the wine-cup, saying, "This is my blood"; and of the observance as a whole said, "This do in remembrance of me." From that simple and touching incident has grown the elaborate sacramentalism of some denominations of the Church. In the Catholic mass this reaches its height, the sacrament becoming a magnificent drama of the Cross and redemption, held by the faithful to be an effectual reenactment of the tragedy of Calvary, viewed as expiation to God for the guilt of mankind.

It is possible to question whether Jesus intended this ritual meal to be perpetually observed by his followers. Ralph Waldo Emerson left the ministry because he believed that it was not so intended. In apostolic times the Holy Communion had not been differentiated in most Churches from the agape or love-feast, which we should call a Church dinner. It is probable that the firm and orderly establishment of this rite, as a distinct sacrament and the central act of Christian worship, was due to Paul. He may have been acting upon suggestions derived from the mystery religions of the Roman Empire in giving it this standing. But, whatever prompted it, this emphasis has proved to be well-warranted by the way in which it has focused Christian devotion upon the life, ministry,

and death of Jesus. So much even a skeptic will acknowledge, looking at it from the standpoint of the persistence, historic continuity, and development of the Christian movement.

It is a far cry, however, from so matter-of-fact a view to some of the theories which have been devised to account for the values which Christian faith perceives in this sacrament. The Roman Catholic Church declares that when Jesus said "This is my body," "This is my blood," he was speaking literally. Accordingly, when bread and wine are consecrated for this use, in the act of consecration an invisible miracle is performed, and under the unchanged appearance of bread and wine the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ come to be physically and exclusively present. There is no more any actual bread and wine, but only the real presence of the Son of God. He is then offered again by the priest upon the altar as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This sacrifice is effectual especially for those who witness it, and for such others, living or dead, as may be designated by the priest as special beneficiaries.

In slight modification of this theory of transubstantiation, the Lutherans and some others maintain that after the words of consecration the bread and wine are still there, but along with them there is also a miraculous real and substantial presence of Christ. This is the theory of consubstantiation.

Calvin and the Reformed Churches held instead that a real but not substantial presence of Christ was brought to believers by and in the act of receiving the Holy Communion. The bread and wine were still unchanged and unaccompanied. But the faithful received, so to speak, a

visit from their Lord, which he would not have paid if they had not come to his table.

This Reformed view is the only one of the historic theories which could be entertained on the understanding of religion to which we have come in the course of this discussion. For we have defined religion as a personal relation to persons. If God paid special heed to bread and wine, in any way, under any circumstances, that would be a personal relation on His part to things. As such, it would be of scientific interest. But it would be without direct religious meaning. On the other hand, if God were to come especially near to His servants under certain conditions, that would be a relationship specifically religious—person to person.

But the question then arises, Will God come closer—that is, give more favorable attention—through an outward ceremony, than in response to prayer? And the only reply which reason will endorse is that God cannot be one to put any material obstacle between us and Him, if He is our Father. Yet an obstacle as well as an opportunity the Holy Communion would be, if in it God came to us more immediately than when we pray, since the Communion is not always available.

We are left, then, with the memorial and symbolical significance which Jesus himself attached to this ceremony. That there are meaning and value in memorials and symbols is a fact which none will question. But they are clearly on the subjective side—that is, they are good on account of the influence which it has upon us to observe them. How great this influence can be, all will appreciate who recall what a symbol of devotion and confidence like the Twenty-third Psalm can do for a bur-

dened heart in all sorts of troubling situations. God is no nearer to us when we repeat that psalm of praise and hope than at any other time when we feel the need of Him. But we are able to realize His nearness far more distinctly under the sway of the rhythm and beauty of those wonderful verses. Such, I take it, is the ministry of the Holy Communion to us. With and in every repetition of the sacrament, we are enabled to lay hold more firmly and more intimately upon what Jesus means in our lives. That alone is more than enough, without any improbable theories of a sacramental miracle, to justify its permanent retention in Christian worship.

4.

Sermons, prayers, the sacraments—and we have mentioned also the altar. The idea of an altar has been discredited among many Protestants by their conscientious objection to the strange dogma that on the altar Christ is offered up again as a propitiation at every Holy Communion or mass. So in Protestant Churches what Catholics would call the altar is commonly moved out from the wall of the sanctuary, leaving room behind it for the clergyman who celebrates the Communion, so that he faces the congregation, instead of standing at the front and facing supposedly toward God. Thus we turn it into a simple communion table.

But the word "altar" has a broader meaning than with this special sacramental reference. It designates any place of offering to God. The gifts of worshipers in money, for instance, may properly be placed upon a communion table at the front and center of the house of worship. The communion table then becomes in this more general sense

an altar. And such an arrangement seems better than to have the pulpit at the center, as the focus of all eyes, because it suggests to every thoughtful mind that what we have and are belong to God. We come to Church, not primarily to get instruction or inspiration, but to give ourselves to God, that He may give Himself to us, in that reciprocal relation of earth with heaven which is the heart of higher religious experience.

It is possible to worship God anywhere. For He is everywhere present. He is not more in any house, however sacred may be its associations in our thought, than in the out-of-doors. Nevertheless there is so much more power in corporate than in undirected individual worship, and the habit of regular approach to God in the company of other worshipers is so basic to a constant sense of God's nearness and care, that as a matter of fact few people ever do worship God anywhere else unless they have first nurtured their sense of the divine, and corrected their relation with their King and Father, by regular participation in the offices of the Church. And it is only as a Church waits collectively upon God in the receptive mood that it can be qualified to do His will wisely and to the full, in the work which follows worship as morning follows evening.

XVIII.
The Church at Work

I.

IN THE rhythm of vital religion, action is the counter-beat to worship. The bane of Christianity has been the notion that religion is a mere state of the individual mind, and the Church only a listening-post. Where that idea is held, faith is identified with endorsement or controversial support of some particular set of theological opinions. So it bears little or no fruit in betterment of human relations. Yet these are as much a part of religion as the relation of individuals to God. Unless religion proves itself good for something besides bolstering up the self-satisfaction of its adherents, it is good for nothing.

The principle of organized cooperative effort in any field is that more can be accomplished by several working together than by their disjointed separate endeavors. An important corollary of this self-evident proposition is that a plan of work arrived at by joint counsel is likely to be larger, more wisely conceived, and more feasible, than a plan made by any one man. Two heads are better than one, and many heads are better than two.

The religious bearing toward life involves two impulses which must be systematically discharged. First, there is

an impulse to do something to express appropriately the feeling of urgency which is inseparable from religious conviction. Faith is not real unless it has driving force. Second, there is an impulse not to act upon one's own initiative only, but to express loyalty to the will of the highest by obedience to some definite statement of that will, which exists independently of one's own allegiance to it. A statement of that sort is offered by every living Church, through its program of activities.

Religion is central to the art of living. Living ought always to be an art. It is an accident instead, as it were, when we simply let things happen to us, as we drift along. It becomes an action when we work to any plan. And action is raised to the plane of art when our plan is made with due regard to those values which yield enduring satisfaction. But every art, including the art of living, necessitates a technique. And a technique cannot be acquired merely by memorizing precepts. It must be practiced. It is preferably practiced in conjunction with other aspirants, so that there may be mutual profit from the mistakes, and also from the achievements, of all participants. We learn by doing; and we learn faster and better by doing together than by doing separately. The way to learn how to live by the principles of religion is to work under direction, and in company with others, upon specific religious tasks.

Right relations with men are as essential to religion as a right relation with God. And the people who normally stand closest to us are those who share our views on the weightiest matters of life. So the Church should be our preferred laboratory of right human relations, next after the family. And we shall take our experiments in

this laboratory seriously, in direct proportion to our realization of the importance of religion. But experiments in fellowship and friendship cannot be carried very far, or have very significant results, unless they go beyond the talking stage. It is by doing things together, sharing a common project and enthusiasm, that people are drawn to one another, come to understand one another's strength and weakness, and are persuaded to make allowances in order that harmony may be preserved and the work may go forward. If the Church had no necessary work in the world, it would have to invent tasks for its adherents to perform corporately, so as to train them in the essentials of just and efficient social intercourse.

But the Church is under no such necessity of invention. For it has work to do in the world which is of the first importance to human welfare. The religious viewpoint must be propagated for mankind's enlightenment as to their own vital interests. It must bear fruits in the transformation of conduct and institutions consonant with God's intention. Otherwise the hope of a sane and personality-favoring social order is doomed to defeat.

2.

In classifying the practical tasks of corporate religion, we may well begin with the demands lying closest to hand. In every Church of any size there are some few members at least who are in material need—who have not enough to eat, or a decent and secure shelter. Sometimes their want is due to their own fault. But the want is real, whatever its cause. More often, probably, it is due to no fault of their own. It is a source both of sadness and of indignation to every reflective observer, that many who cannot

justly be criticized for lack of effort or judgment or for improvidence are victimized and impoverished by the chaotic accidents of our present haphazard social system. This is especially likely to occur through sickness or in old age. The Church will feel a responsibility to relieve these destitute comrades, and put them on their feet again if possible, or see them through to the end if their earning days are over. For the Church is a household. Its members have family claims on one another.

The early Church went so far in its discharge of this obligation as to practice a voluntary communism. That seems to have been an ill-advised venture. But every Church still rests under this obligation of relief. In quiet ways a great deal of social service is being rendered along this line by our Churches.

But where the spirit of Jesus reigns in the hearts of men, the sense of social responsibility is not confined within the limits of Church membership. Help for the poor in the community at large has always been felt as a claim, which most Churches have in some measure honored. Sometimes there has been a sanctimonious insistence, especially on the part of the undeserving rich, that the beneficiaries of such gifts should be the deserving poor. But that requirement is happily yielding of late to the perception that all the poor are deserving of help, just because they are poor, though the kind of help to be given will depend upon the kind of person who is to receive it.

In most cities today activities of this sort have been systematized to prevent overlapping and pauperization. A new group of benevolent societies, called the social agencies, with a new professional class of social workers, has come into being. By a logical extension of its own

immediate task, every Church in touch with contemporary life will be working with and through these social agencies, both by gifts and by direct participation of its members in their activities.

Again, each Church has a responsibility for keeping itself alive and building itself up. In one direction, this will mean exerting Christian persuasiveness to bring the unchurched into touch with religion, to the mutual benefit of all concerned. In some communities there are too many Churches for the total population. Where that situation exists, religious statesmanship with no denominational axe to grind will seek to bring about combinations and eliminations. But in most communities there are plenty of people to go around, if the Churches could attract them all. In such a place, if a Church is content with the people it already has, it is guilty of neglecting the masses at its door to whom Jesus would certainly have sought to bring the refreshment, courage, and hope of religion. To embrace this opportunity is a task which cannot be performed unless it engages the interest and effort of the Church's membership as a whole.

In another direction, the work of extending the influence of religion will mean training the young in moral and religious principles. This is the field of religious education. Religion cannot be actually imparted by mere teaching, to be sure. But teaching can impart the factual and rational basis for sound religious experience—the technique of the art, so to speak. The Church School is the most challenging and promising department of any Church. It needs as its teachers and officers the most intelligent members of the congregation. Too often it has to be content merely with human odds and ends—

people of good hearts and weak heads. The right people excuse themselves on the plea that they are too busy. But no other business marginal to the earning of a livelihood can be so important for a Christian as the right training of the young. A Church School conducted by competent teachers, in earnest about their work, will produce great results, in spite of the handicap of voluntary attendance and a minimum of time available, no matter what theory of instruction is followed. But even the most advanced of pedagogical theories will get nowhere if their execution is in the hands of incompetents.

From the special task of training its own youth in religion, the interest of the Church will naturally go on to embrace education in general. In a land where good public schools are to be found in every district, education ought not to be under Church control. The Church is warranted in stepping into the area of secular instruction for citizenship, only when the state is failing in its duty. Nevertheless an intelligent interest taken by religious men and women in the standards of public education is indispensable, if the schools are to be brought and kept up to the level of humane idealism, instead of functioning as mere factories of materialistically motivated craftsmanship.

Another responsibility of the Church in its own community lies in providing social life—including what are called "good times," on a rational and constructive footing—for all who need it. Some Christians deplore this idea, because it has no obvious connection with worship. But again we must remind ourselves that human relations are as much the concern of religion as relations with God.

Vice flourishes where clean amusement is frowned upon.

Many a country community has a thin coating of non-social pietism over a veritable cesspool of morbid preoccupation with sex, which would be cleaned out over night if the local churchmen and churchwomen would see it as a part of their Christian duty to provide normal and attractive outlets for the high spirits of the neighborhood. Religion is not contaminated when a place is made in its expressional activities for innocent gaiety. It is redeemed from the contempt of its critics by showing itself wholesomely human as well as hypothetically divine.

Loneliness is probably the most severe hazard to straight living and good citizenship in the cities. In every great city there are today thousands of young people, married or single, who have had plenty of friends in the past, but who have been uprooted by some current of business, and transplanted into unfamiliar surroundings where no one knows their first names. How are they to be favorably incorporated into their new environment?

If they are left to their own devices, they may be fortunate enough to find others equally lonely and equally decent, and to live with them on a little friendly island set in an alien tide of living. But that is unlikely. And their neighbors will not call on them, to welcome them. That simply isn't done any more. The probability is that they will either dwell in painful isolation or pick up chance acquaintances for better or for worse—usually the latter —in movies, dance-halls, or poolrooms. Yet these people vote in the city's elections. And some of them may have it in them to be leaders of the community a few years hence.

Their plight is a summons to the Church. It is quite possible for more good to be accomplished in the salvage

of lives through the social rooms than in the place of worship of a Church; and it will usually be found that the social rooms will lead into the place of worship, so to speak. To create a warm home atmosphere for the lonely is to pump the saving oxygen of the neighborly spirit into the lungs of the gasping democracy of our huge inhuman metropolitan centers.

From these beginnings in concrete approach to social problems it is virtually inevitable to proceed to the question of the Church's attitude toward social and political problems in the large and in the abstract. But upon most political and social issues differences of opinion obtain among persons equally well informed, and equally zealous for the improvement of social conditions. If a Church were to align itself with any one party, or were to espouse any one side in these controversial matters, it would in effect cease to be a Church. And the first concern of a Church is to remain a Church.

On the other hand, however, it is distinctly the Church's duty to call attention to faults in the social order and grave flaws in the conduct of politics, to state the problems in these regions, and to air them, so that every Christian, and as many others as can be reached, shall feel that there is an imperative call for thorough thinking and bold action, and that to neglect these evils is to be unfaithful in manhood and citizenship. Classes conducted in every Church, for non-partisan study and discussion of the needs for social betterment and the various proposed ways and means for achieving it, would revitalize religion in its relation to the larger interests of humanity, without committing anyone to any one course of civic action.

3.

Through this consideration of the bearing of the Church toward civic issues we are led beyond the bounds of the parish into the region of the world-wide obligation and outreach of every Church. Christianity, along with Buddhism and Mohammedanism, is one of the missionary religions. That is often interpreted to mean that it lies in the nature of Christianity to conduct a campaign in every land against all other forms of religion as if they were wholly false and bad, in order to recruit members, by hook or by crook, for the Church. Probably there are still a good many Christians who conceive the extension program of their faith in those terms, with a further notion that all but Christians are heathen, and will be lost or punished forever unless they accept the gospel.

But it is not possible for us to take such a view. For we have agreed that there is some truth and goodness in all forms of religion; that mere nominal adherence to any religion does not make a man really religious; and that God is the Father of all men, and can be trusted to do His part in looking after them all. Fortunately the modern mission enterprise is not conducted along these bigoted lines, either. It is regarded by its leaders as a means for expressing good-will toward our brothers and sisters in God's family, and of sharing with them what we and they have found to be of most value in life.

Wherever a Christian goes, in his own country or overseas, he finds that they whom he visits have much to offer and to teach. There are good men everywhere who have never been in any Church. There are sages of every race whose wisdom is susceptible of universal application.

There are types of culture and achievements of civilization among every people which are not only interesting but profitable for every other people to observe. It is with this in mind that Christian missionaries have carried on extensive researches into the history and literature of many non-Christian nations, have even sometimes opened up those fields for the first time to the people whose guests they were, and have served as enthusiastic interpreters of what they have found to the lands from which they came.

But we Christians do feel, too, that we have something to give which everyone needs. We have the historic figure of Jesus, his teachings, and the international fellowship of his Church. We have scientific techniques for the relief of suffering and the raising of the general standard of living, which have been worked out among Christian peoples, under the inspiration of Jesus' example of hopeful effort for the good of all. These do not belong of right to us exclusively, but we are in the privileged position of enjoying them. They are not ours to keep selfishly for ourselves. They are ours to share with others. It is the old law of "noblesse oblige"—special prerogatives involve special duties.

So the Churches as a whole, and with far less heed for sects and divisive watchwords than at the home base, are engaged in a vast enterprise to make Jesus known, and to multiply by sharing the benefits of his unique influence, all over the world. In this era of close intercommunication, when space has been almost annihilated as measured in terms of time, and when no people can possibly live without many intimate foreign contacts, this enterprise is probably the mightiest force at work for mutual understanding and good-will among different races and nations.

Knowing what I do of the way this work is done and the scale of the operations, I am sure that I should support it, simply as a loyal world-citizen hating war and loving amity, even if I had no belief at all in Christian theology.

Every Church, like every individual, has a little and a wider self. The little self is concerned for its own selfish advantage. The wider self includes the world, and seeks satisfaction through active pursuit of values in human living which are greater than, and independent of, selfish objectives. In the degree that any religious society becomes aware of its wider self and the nature of its true good, it will be a working Church, not a mere listening-post.

XIX.

The Religious Temper

I.

IT IS a matter of moment to determine what the prevailing temper or tone of the religious mind ought to be. Or rather, to discover what it will naturally be. For we must be consistent in applying to all matters affecting conduct the scientific method of description of the normal, instead of laying down rules without manifest relation to the circumstances.

The habitual temper of a man is a compound of his inborn disposition and the viewpoint he has taken up. Some men obey their disposition, without applying their viewpoint as a check. But only relatively thoughtless people follow that policy. The more reflective a man becomes, the more his viewpoint dominates his disposition. Thus a man who is an optimist by temperament may be embittered into pessimism and cynicism by a gloomy view. On the other hand, a cynic by temperament may be persuaded into something approaching geniality by a cheerful view. Our concern is with the effect of the viewpoint characteristic of religion at its best upon a man's disposition, in defining the general temper of his relations with other men and the world.

Of course there is no such thing as one distinctive viewpoint shared by all religious people. For religion has been associated with many different and incompatible theories as to the tenor and direction of human experience. But in general these theories fall under three main types. All three types are found among Christians.

2.

The first may be called apocalyptic pessimism. The apocalyptic view is that of most of the Christians who look forward to a second coming of Christ. This next time they hold that he is not to come, as he did before, as a peasant leader, befriending all men, and holding their allegiance only through their affection for him. He is to come as a conquering ruler, imposing his will by force upon all nations. This view was widely held in the early Church, and has many adherents today. It was born out of the discouragement which came upon the first generations of Christians in their apparently hopeless conflict with the hostile pagan world-power of Rome. They adopted it from an old and widespread Jewish precedent, the anticipation of a coming day of Jahve. And among the Jews it had been born out of the discouragement produced by their loss of national independence.

Jesus was familiar with this view. He may have regarded it as probably containing elements of truth. Certainly he borrowed some of its imagery for convenience in illustrating his own ideas. He did this, for instance, in presenting a new statement of the fundamental moral distinction as lying between kindness and heartlessness rather than between Hebrew and Gentile or between orthodox and heretic (Matthew 25:31-46). Some of his

utterances would indicate that he went farther than this toward accepting an anticipation which was a part of the furniture of all men's minds in his time and country. But by Christians who hold this view today these utterances are given exclusive stress, at the expense of other elements in Jesus' teaching, much more markedly original, which by implication, at least, conflict with those of his words which have an apocalyptic tinge.

These Christians who take literally the apocalyptic passages in the Gospels look for the triumph of God's sword, after the failure of His word, because in their opinion manners and morals among men are going from bad to worse. Human affairs are a sorry mess, and getting sorrier every day. God does give mankind a chance, to be sure, to turn from sin to righteousness. But that is only in order to play fair with them. He expects no good results on any considerable scale from this magnanimous gesture. At most, out of all the billions, He will probably succeed on these lines only with the hundred and forty and four thousand for whom that weird book, the Revelation, predicts redemption. He has known all along that with the rest His moral resources must fail, so that in the end He will have to come in and set matters right vindictively and by sheer strength of arms.

We need not pause for more than a passing comment upon the awful picture of God which this view offers us. If any earthly ruler were so arbitrary in his enactments, and so unskilled in handling his subjects, that he could only maintain himself by force, he would come in for the contempt of all reasoning men. This is not an idea of God with which men who reverence Him, and see in Jesus His likeness, can have anything to do.

What its result must be on the thinking of people who accept it is obvious. Regarding the state of mankind as fundamentally hopeless, so far as men's own efforts are concerned, and looking for God to come in from the outside, instead of seeing Him as always resident and active in His world, they will be impatient of any natural hopefulness, and intolerant of all who dissent from their opinion—regarding them as doomed to pay for their folly in terrific punishment at the hands of a God outraged by their lack of faith.

At the opposite extreme from this type of religious theory are the visionary optimists. These are they to whom evil seems a mere shadow cast by perverse human imagination—a shadow which can be dispelled by correct thinking, without any need of action. They believe in God so thoroughly that they refuse to believe in anything or anyone else. They will not even believe in the world as God has evidently made it, or in the freedom He has conferred upon men by delegating to them some of His power.

It is hard to find fault with any man for believing too exclusively in God. For the consequence of so unbounded a trust in Him is often a singularly gracious and attractive temper. Yet error is as fatal to truth in one direction as in another. I, for one, am turned skeptical toward such faith by the hard facts we knock up against every day. And by observing those who hold it I am led to believe that this excessive optimism is shallow. It is usually self-centered. It does not inspire much compassion for the troubles of others, since they could presumably be rid of them if only they would take the trouble to think straight.

And it does not usually stand up very long against troubles undergone at first hand which stubbornly resist dismissal by mere affirmation that they are not there.

3.

In contrast with apocalyptic pessimism and visionary optimism, the religious viewpoint which we have seen reason to adopt will result, if I am not mistaken, in what I should like to call creative meliorism. Meliorism is a word invented by George Eliot to designate the attitude of those whose purpose it is to make things better than they are. That attitude shares with pessimism the admission that things are pretty bad. But it also shares with optimism the conviction that they might be worse. Its distinctive contribution to supplement these borrowings is the hopeful and buoyant certainty that it is within man's capacity to set wrong things right, and to bring about real, progressive, and cumulative improvement. It is not afraid of making new plans and trying them out, without timidity on account of the absence of precedent. That courage in taking the initiative is the creative aspect of this mood.

To me this seems the only sensible temper and tone for the religious mind. It seems to follow, indeed, from the very meaning of religion. For religion's business is with right relations among men, and between men and God. And evidently it would have no business beyond maintaining the status quo if all relations were right to begin with; while there would be no sense in this business if all relations were so wrong that they could never be set right, except by semi-occasional exception to a prevailing rule of gloom and calamity.

No doubt the reason why this temper of creative meliorism will commend itself so strongly to most of us is that we have been brought up in touch with scientific methods and aims. But that is no cause for apology. Science is the most comprehensive and beneficent achievement of the human mind to date. Even the people who in the name of religion criticize and oppose science profit constantly by what science does for them. They read by electric light; they broadcast their diatribes by radio; they employ physicians and surgeons equipped with the best training and the latest apparatus. In innumerable ways they avail themselves of services for their convenience which have been rendered possible only by rigidly accurate scientific procedure.

Scientists are not generally conscious, to be sure, of operating in the spirit of Jesus. But the fact is that the natural sciences, stillborn in ancient Greece, were reborn in a Christian environment, and have grown to maturity under the encouragement of Jesus' charter of free truth-seeking—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—despite much obstinate opposition from dogmatists who have taken his name in vain. The purpose of the sciences, moreover, is clearly the same as animated Jesus; namely, to do everything possible, in the best ways available, for the betterment of the lot of humanity in this world, with which any other world must be continuous if it is to have any meaning at all.

It is in this sense, and this sense only—that science means fearless testing for truth in the interest of human welfare—that we can apply the adjective "scientific" to the approach we have been making to the problems of the-

ology, and the conclusions we have reached. The natural sciences employ methods of laboratory experimentation which are not open to us in this region. The only laboratory to which we have access is that of character. Experiments in character are not subject to exact control. But, like the scientists, we have been looking for truth, wherever it may lie, without prejudice. If people of scientific mind are to have any religion at all, it would seem that it must lie in the direction which we have been exploring.

A religious man of scientific habits of thought will be a realist in accepting facts which cannot be honestly evaded, whether they accord with his preconceived notions or not. Such facts include the troubles which have so large a part in every life. Such a fact also is the being of God. A woman brought up in a family of high-minded atheists, her father a professor of biology in the days when the Churches were excommunicating scientists who accepted the hypothesis of evolution, once said to me, "I don't want to believe in God. I find Him distinctly disturbing to contemplate. But I have to. I discovered Him in the chemical laboratory when I was in college, and now I find Him everywhere."

But a scientifically religious man will also be an idealist. He will be pushing on toward goals worth aiming at, which lie in the future. And the worth of his goals will consist in their bearing upon the wider self, which includes all persons in the scope of its interests. For this habit of mind sets men free from petty individual ambitions by directing their attention absorbingly upon matters incalculably vaster than selfish desires—the timeless principles and concatenated truths of the universe.

4.

This variety of the religious temper will be tolerant of dissent, moreover. For not all men are possessed of the same body of truth to reflect upon. And not all look at truth from the same angle. From this standpoint a man's hope will be, not that ultimately everyone will agree with him, but that sooner or later he and they will rise together above their differences into a more comprehensive view than any of them have yet attained. Doubtless in that view all things will be seen in corrected perspective, and perhaps some contrasts which once seemed basic will be found to be complementary sides of the same truth.

Tolerance breeds both humility and patience. Humility and patience express themselves in courtesy. Courtesy is the solvent of most quarrels, and the sponsor and guardian of right human relations. It restricts controversy to an academic realm, where light is sought without heat.

But, with all his fraternal respect for men of other minds and traditions, the creative meliorist—the man whose temper is governed by religious conviction won through free and careful thinking—will be firm at three points which underlie and make natural his dominant mood. He will be sensitive to maladjustments among men, and to the pains they have to endure. He will make his plans for their relief on the basis of a reasoned assurance that God is; that God is like Jesus; and that God backs up every human endeavor to do His will. And he will be confident in the power of men, as God's children and partners, to set wrong things right, and make this world a better place for successive generations of the human race to live in.

Much stress has been laid in the past upon belligerency as a phase of the religious temper. Sometimes this has taken form in actual warfare, as in Islam's conquests by the sword, and in the Crusades, when in Jesus' abused name hordes of European barbarians invaded the Eastern lands, the most cultivated and advanced regions of that time, and laid them waste. But surely there is no room for belligerency against any men in the heart of a man to whom the real meaning of religion has been made manifest.

For uncompromising hostility against the evil in men and institutions, however, there is more room than ever, as our eyes are opened to the pressing need of changes for the better in humanity's material and social environment, if it is to be made over into a garden favorable to the growth of personality. A warfare, not of swords or arguments, but of unrelenting confrontation of selfish purposes with just ideals, of prejudice and error with truth, of double-dealing with fair-play—that is the sublimation of the martial impulse which is called for, to put power behind the enlightenment characteristic of the religious temper at its best.

XX.

Eternal Life

I.

THUS far in this study no use has been made of four words generally overworked in discussions of religion: soul, spiritual, everlasting, eternal. The omission was purposeful.

For through vague and careless use these words have become mere items in a sort of holy slang, while through long use they have acquired associations in careful speech which echo antique errors of theology. Moreover, they imply reference to another life than this. But it is manifest to every candid student that, while Jesus believed fully in immortality, he addressed himself primarily to the problems of this life while it continues. He found within earthly experience all the reasons for right living. So, if we were to follow him, it was essential that we should postpone our inquiries about another life until we had analyzed the life we now know to discover the dependable satisfactions which it affords and the way in which they can be obtained.

But in the end we must also examine the problem of life beyond the world of the five senses, if our synopsis of religion is to be complete. No better starting-point

offers for this investigation than will be afforded by scrutiny of the real meaning of these four words which we have left out up to this point.

By the soul it is proper to understand what we are wont in current parlance to designate as mind, person, or personality. For our idea of a person coincides exactly with the original intention of the term "soul," while excluding certain superstitious addenda through the centuries which the modern mind finds radically unacceptable.

The adjective "spiritual" is one of the most misused words in the English language. It is the key-word of that holy slang, the emotional jargon of unthinking religionists, which is all too familiar to most of us. It is often stuck in to a homily to fill a gap and give a pious flavor. It has, however, two precise and legitimate meanings.

First, it is a synonym of "religious" in the narrower sense, or "devotional." When that is the meaning intended, it is preferable to use one of those two synonyms for the sake of clarity.

Second, it may be used philosophically to describe the timeless and non-spatial. In this meaning it is the equivalent of the adjective "eternal," when that adjective in turn is correctly applied.

The word "everlasting," meaning "continuing endlessly," does not occur in the original languages of the Bible. Everlastingness is implied in the New Testament, but is not explicitly stated. When the word occurs in an English version of the Old Testament, it translates a Hebrew word which means "for a very long time," but which does not specifically include the idea that there will be no end at all. Indeed, there is no word in ancient Hebrew which does include that idea. It is doubtful

whether it entered Hebrew thought until after the Old Testament was completed.

In the King James or Authorized Version of the New Testament, "everlasting" is used to render a Greek adjective which means literally "age-long." From this adjective in its literal significance the notion of endlessness is definitely excluded, the meaning being "as long as the age or period, and no longer." But only once in the New Testament is it employed in this literal sense. In all the other places where it occurs, it appears to be used figuratively, in a derived philosophical sense, to describe quality rather than quantity. The quality it describes is that of being timeless and non-spatial. So it is correctly translated in the Revised or American Standard Version by the word "eternal." "Eternal" is not a synonym of "everlasting." It implies everlastingness, no doubt; but it includes a great deal more.

This prompts a further remark about the word "spiritual." That word occurs in English versions of the New Testament as the translation of another word than the Greek for "eternal." This other word bears upon phenomena attributed to the Holy Spirit's influence, as at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13) and on other lesser occasions of a like order. In so far as we are in a position to understand these phenomena through modern analogies, they seem to have been symptoms of discharge of an abnormal nerve-tension induced by emotional excitement in persons of unstable nervous organization.

Similar occurrences, except for the embroidery of miracle in the statement of facts in the Acts, are still observed in certain extravagant types of religious revival.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that no thoughtful Christian nowadays would want to be "spiritual" in that sense.

On the other hand, however, the word "eternal," in the American Standard Version, means exactly the same thing as the word "spiritual," as it is now used in philosophical connections. So the meaning which Jesus and the Apostles intended will be much clearer if we turn "eternal" into "spiritual," and speak of spiritual reward, spiritual punishment, and spiritual life.

2.

This study of words should help to clear away some of the fog in our traditional religious vocabulary. With these findings in mind, we have still to address ourselves to one of the most poignant questions which man addresses to the universe: Does human personality survive the death of the body?

That it does survive has been the opinion of most religious men, everywhere and at all times. But mere opinions are of no value to us. Much belief in immortality can be accounted for as a form of insistence upon one's own importance, or as an expression of the organic will to live, which is in all animals and reaches reflective consciousness in man. This self-assertiveness, projected beyond the grave by the imagination, has been buttressed by supposed evidence from dreams and the like. It has sometimes been formulated in preposterous theories, such as the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as an actual reassembling of the identical particles of which the body consisted at death. How impossible this notion is will be

evident if one recalls that the disintegrated bodies of untold billions of human beings have been reabsorbed into the soil, and have emerged again in vegetation, upon which other human beings have then fed, so that the same particles must be supposed to have made part of innumerable human bodies in the long cycles of life on earth.

But to dismiss abruptly the hope of immortality because it has often rested on irrational grounds would be going too far and too fast. Every normal man takes at least a deep interest in the subject of life after death, even if he is too sophisticated to acknowledge it. And it is not without significance that such critical thinkers as Plato and Jesus have believed in the survival of personality. Their endorsement makes this idea worthy at least of respectful scrutiny.

Jesus implied his faith at this point in nearly everything he ever said or did; and now and then he stated it explicitly. A striking instance of this is found in his controversy with the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23-33), coming to its climax in these phrases: "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

It is grossly unfair to Christian theology, even of the earliest period, to represent the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as necessarily meaning anything so crude as it appears to mean in the form in which many materially minded believers have held it. What it meant to Paul, our earliest systematic theologian, he sets forth in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (15:35-55). Here is no unthinkable notion of reassembled particles, but a subtle and majestic thesis that life here and life beyond, though

different in kind, are organically related, like seed and harvest, the one springing out of the other; and that in the life beyond we are to be equipped with instruments of self-expression at least as effective as our bodies are here. Ours is to be no shadow-existence; we are to be really, substantially, actively alive.

That is what the resurrection of the body has always stood for in the minds of the more profound Christian philosophers. And certainly, in comparison with dim notions, such as the Greeks and early Hebrews held, of a land of dreary, unsatisfied, restless shades—Hades or Sheol—this is the only expression of the hope of immortality which is worthy of man's nature and capacities as we know them on earth.

Having thus cleared the ground, we must next note that whether this hope is warranted or not is an open question. It is often objected that there is no evidence for survival. That is, no communications have ever been received from the departed which carry complete conviction to the scientific mind. What may come of psychical research in the future it is impossible to predict; at its present stage, however, its data are not conclusive. But, on the other hand, there is no evidence against survival, either. If personal life does continue after death, it is not hard to imagine reasons why communications with persons still in the body may be difficult or impracticable. Nothing can be proved either way, in the scientific sense. We shall have to deal with probabilities, weighing one set of them against the other. But, as we have seen, that is the case in every field of observation, except in mathematics.

Suppose we ask, first, what the probability is that per-

sonality does not survive the body. It can be put briefly. Mind is so intricately interrelated with body, so dependent upon body for its development, maintenance, and health, that thought seems to be a mere function of living matter, like digestion.

That sounds like a pretty formidable argument. It assumes, however, that matter is something simple about which we are fully informed, while mind apart from matter is by contrast hopelessly obscure. But matter is not simple, and we know very little about it. Under the physicist's scrutiny it dissolves into molecules, into atoms, into electrons and ions, into electrically charged points or positions in space, into energy at varying rates of vibration. The deeper we look, the more mysterious it appears. To explain mind as a function of matter, whatever else it may do, certainly does not simplify the problem.

Further, granted to the full the intimacy of the relations between mind and body, it is quite as likely on the face of it that the mind is dependent upon the body only for its successful functioning in time and space, and that bodies are mental constructs for this purpose, as that the body has constructed the mind to facilitate its adjustments in the struggle for physical existence. It is not clear at a glance which is the cart and which the horse in this combination.

But in the course of this discussion we have seen many reasons for believing that it is mind which plans and builds, while matter is its building material. Unless we have been wholly misled, the rôle of matter in the universe is instrumental. It is a tool employed by directing purposes, personal—that is to say, mental—in their nature. When we see a man and a machine together, it would be

theoretically possible to debate as to which came first and made the other. But in fact we have no doubt about it. Men make machines, but machines never make men. So it is with mind and matter in the universe—with personality and body in the individual. The body is an instrument of self-realization and self-expression under certain definite restrictions of environment, namely, the conditions of life on earth. When life on earth is over, this instrument is no longer needed. Must the man perish when the machine is scrapped?

Again, we have found reason to believe that personality is the end-product of nature. And personality realizes itself in character, achieved through work in this world along lines which enlarge the outreach, sympathy, and knowledge of the person. If there be a God, and through all the processes of nature He is about the business of producing human character of like quality with His own, then it is incredible that He would wipe out His end-product instead of conserving it for still further development under other conditions. We can hardly think of God as petulantly giving up His experiment with any human being just because it has not worked out well on earth. And we certainly cannot think of Him as destroying the results of His labors when they have turned out the way He wanted. When a man gives up because things have not gone well we call him a quitter. If an artist destroyed his masterpiece wilfully we should call him insane. God is surely neither insane nor a quitter.

So under some conditions or other, in some sort of environment, we have to think of human life as going on. We cannot imagine that environment or formulate those conditions, because they lie beyond the range of our pres-

ent conception. But we may be sure that under God's care they will be at least as well ordered for the growth of personality as those we now know.

Farther than that we cannot go, except to add that essentially the next life must be like this one, or it would be meaningless for us. That is, it must involve continued self-consciousness and self-determination, with opportunities for right and wrong choices and for learning by experience. If it did not, we should cease to be persons and become mere mechanical dolls or vegetables; and the purpose of our creation and preservation would be defeated. And we have to think of ourselves as unlimited in future time—co-existent from now on with God—because He is not subject to time's accidents, and His love for us must be as constant as Himself.

3.

God is not subject to time's accidents. Yet He enters into the time process, as an active director of the universe and partner with men. As superior to time He is eternal. As entering into time He is temporal. How can this be? Are not eternity and time mutually exclusive?

The notion that they are has been responsible for strange vagaries in theology. On the one hand, some theologians have maintained that God has no actual contact with us men and our vicissitudes, because He is above and outside of time, in which they occur. To use the technical term, He is, on this view, impassible. On the other hand, other theologians have maintained that God is limited by time, like men. According to these, the word "eternal" can mean only two things. It can be used to signify "ever-

lasting." And it can be used to describe statements which are true at all times and in all places to which they apply. Such statements may range all the way up from a simple arithmetical formula, like "two plus two equals four," to a sublime law of right relations, like "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These statements universally applicable are what we mean by principles. But aside from these principles, and the everlasting existence of God and His children, there is no eternity.

Yet religious experts, and foremost among them Jesus, have always held that eternity does exist, as the totality of all things real, past, present, and to come, seen in their true nature and in all-togetherness by God, and illustrating to Him the perfect accomplishment of His perfect will. This realm of the eternal is always present. But we cannot usually discern it. When we do discern it, even for a moment, we experience ecstasy. To recognize its reality and to try to realize it is a part of religion, as it seeks right relations with God and fuller knowledge of His truth. Jesus had this in mind when he sounded the keynote of his ministry by proclaiming, "The Kingdom of God is at hand"—that is, within man's reach here and now. Have Jesus and his fellow-experts been wrong in this supposition?

I, for one, believe in following the experts in their own field. So I believe in eternity, in the full sense—the all-togetherness of all times and places in the immediate grasp of God's awareness—as well as in time, with its arrow always pointing forward, as I experience it. And I see no reason why time and eternity should be mutually exclusive. Time may be just one of the dimensions, like

length, breadth, and height, which set the bounds of our limited earthly outlook upon reality. Or it may be one room in a great house, and that house eternity. However we put it, we may legitimately and can with no great difficulty think of time as part of eternity, so that God can dwell in them both.

4.

So we come to the close of our course together across the rough and unfamiliar country of religion, of which theology is the map. It is a hard country to travel in. But there is noble scenery en route. And when we arrive at our goal we find that the toilsome pilgrimage has been worth every effort it cost. We have found God through man, and His likeness in the man Jesus. We have found that His laws are reasonable, and His justice is equable and sure. We have discovered that ours may be the privilege of working with God and one another to make this a better world for our kind to live in. And we have come to a rational conviction that life goes on beyond the earth, so that death is not the end of man, but a change of grade upward, or in some cases it may be provisionally downward, in the school of experience, which educates persons in the arts of character.

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